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SIDE-LIGHTS
ON ENGLISH SOCIETY.

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SIGNOR GALIVANTI AND LADY FALLOWFIELD.

II. Frontispiece.

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SIDE - LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY,

OR

SKETCHES FROM LIFE, SOCIAL & SATIRICAL.

Eustace Clare

BY

E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY,

AUTHOR OF 'THE MEMBER FOR PARIS,' 'THAT ARTFUL VICAR,' ETC.

Illustrated

WITH NEARLY 300 ENGRAVINGS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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NOBLE LORDS.



I.

INTRODUCTORY.



THE British House of Peers rules the Queen and the kingdom, and seems likely to do so for a long time to come. This may not be written in the Constitution ; and it might be denied by some credulous members of the Lower House, who affect to think that a seat in Parliament means power to legislate. The two Reform Bills, the Repeal of the Corn-Laws, the in-

creased circulation of newspapers, and the Ballot Act have not even scotched the ascendancy of the Peers: those who have ever tried conclusions with them well know it. Instead of ruling in the old way they make their influence felt after new fashions, and that is all the difference. In things ecclesiastical and civil, in politics, in commerce, in the magistracy, on the stock exchange, on the turf, and in the press, they are paramount. Watch the strings which guide all the movements of enterprise, thought, or legislation in the Empire, and you will find Noble Lords pulling them. Owners of two-thirds of the land in the country, and holders, either in their own persons or in those of their relatives, of all the posts of dignity and emolument worth having, how can they be otherwise than omnipotent?

This being so, it may not be uninteresting to jot down some impressions of the various types of Noble Lords now or recently flourishing.



II.

THE MILLIONAIRE DUKE.

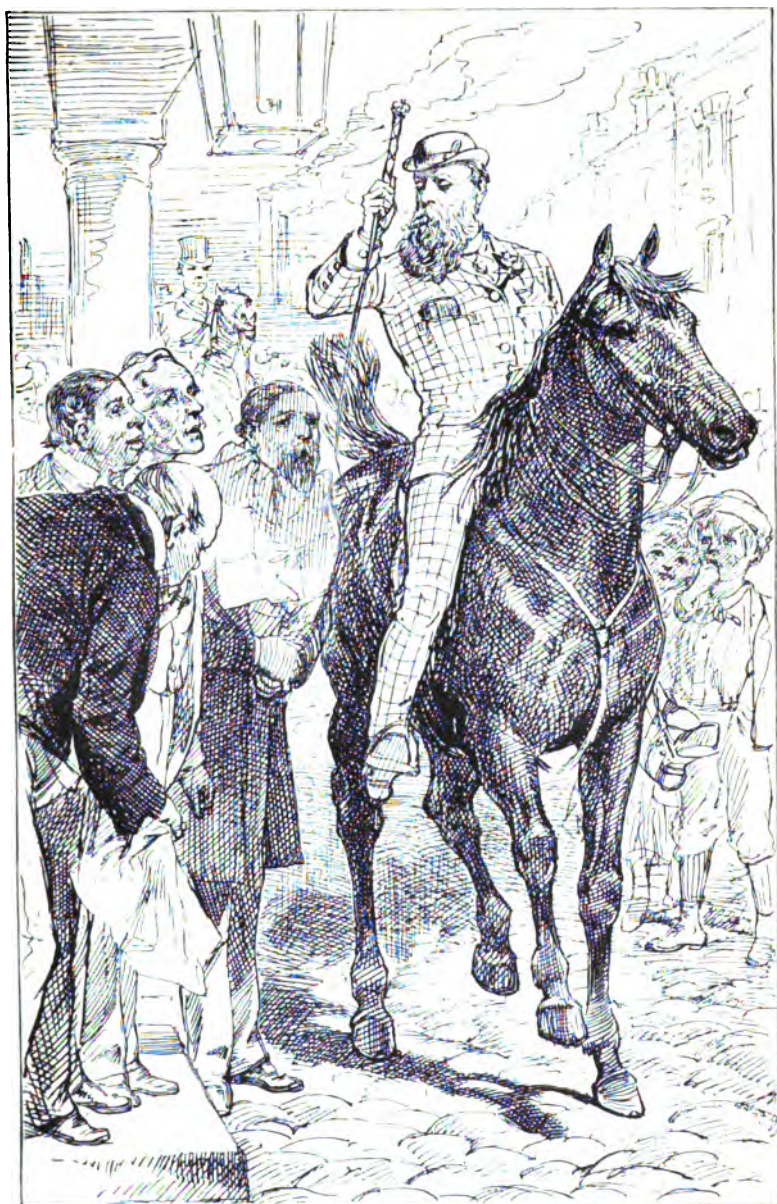
A splendid type, this, the cream of the peerage, one who does not mix with the vulgar, and only dabbles in politics with the tip of his walking-stick, so to say, like a loungee stirring a puddle.

The Duke of Heatherland is his name. He has estates in six counties, a yacht, a pack of hounds, a hundred horses, two domestic chaplains, and sixteen livings in his gift. He is Lord-Lieutenant of the county where his favourite castle stands, and became a colonel of yeomanry on attaining his majority, much like those Russian princes (at whom Englishmen are very fond of laughing) who have a colonel's commission put into their cradles. His Grace is also chairman of various hospitals, agricultural, charitable, and literary societies; he holds exalted rank in a Freemasons' lodge; and is a Knight of the Garter.

What more could society do for the splendid creature? Had it made him a king, he would have been less happy. A king, forsooth! Why, monarchs envy his Grace, who holds in one of his hands as much power as they do in both, without being bored by any of the responsibilities or dull worries of Royalty.

Does the Duke of Heatherland wish for the servile homage of the vulgar? Let him only mount his hack and ride at midday through the market-town which adjoins his estate: heads will be bared wherever he goes; aldermen will leave off quarrelling or lunching to run out on the pavement and catch his august eye as he lazily fingers his hat-brim; women will compare his calm cold glance to a ray of moonlight; and little boys will poke their fingers into their mouths from sheer abashment at the sight of him. But if his Grace prefers the applause of a larger multitude, the loud praises of newspapers, and so forth, let him only take a part in promoting one of the popular 'fads' of the hour—such as the woes of the 'unspeakable Turk,' anti-vivisection meetings, schools for cookery, coffee-palaces, or artisans' dwellings, and he will be served with as much flattery as any stomach can swallow without nausea.

As to power, who is it that wants a post in the customs, a consulate, a commissionership in India, or a deanery? The Duke of Heatherland has only to nudge his old crony, the Prime Minister, and the boon is conferred without hesitation. The Queen would have to finesse for days to obtain a favour which his Grace gets for the asking; and, perhaps, if her Majesty requested such favours too often, the Premier would turn crusty on the subject of royal



THE DUKE OF HEATHERLAND.

"Aldermen leave off lunching to run out and catch his august eye."

II. 12.

prerogative, whereas nobody has ever questioned the prerogative of dukes to gather as many of the plums of office as they have appetites for. A Premier who rode a-tilt at his Grace would find himself unhorsed sooner than he expected.

The Duke of Heatherland has not power of life and death; but he can socially smash an enemy till there is nothing left of him but the skin and bones. He can ruin, or he can inflict the milder penalty of making his foe's life absolutely burdensome, till the distraught creature flies abroad or hangs himself. To effect these things he has only to whisper that So-and-So is a blackguard, and to express a grave surprise at meeting him in respectable houses. A foreign Duke who thus behaved might be called to account by means of a cartel; but duelling is out of fashion in England, and a man who is blackened by one of the upper aristocracy must scrape off the blacking as he can, or be content to carry it on him to his grave. It is said that one peppery, but sensible, gentleman, having, on a hot day, and yielding possibly to the instigation of claret, mightily huffed his Grace by contradicting him, repented of what he had done on finding that implacable ostracism was to be the penalty of his rudeness. Making no bones about it, he contrived, thanks to the great man's valet, to get into the Duke's presence, and threw himself upon his

knees on the hearthrug, vowing to remain there until he was forgiven. His Grace deigned to smile, and restored the penitent to social favour by remarking amongst his toadies that B. was not a blackguard after all, but only a blanked idiot.

This was just like the Duke of Heatherland, who is a good-natured grandee, too well aware of his immense might to make vicious use of it. He would rather do a good thing than an unkind one, and really does not a little in the way of helping people who cannot help themselves. He once gave back a character and social standing to a cashiered officer who had offended Mrs. Grundy, while all London cried, 'Bravo, Duke! Do it again, whenever you like.' He passes for a philanthropist and a Liberal, and is generous with his money, which is the most uncommon form of Liberalism. Numbers of cripples are stumping about London with cork-legs of his purchasing; for the One-legged Asylum is an institution of his founding. He also possesses a fire-engine of his own, and when a conflagration breaks out in a slum about Westminster, he may not unfrequently be seen, having a helmet on, and plying his hose with unimaginable energy on the ruins of a house that was hardly worth saving. Not devoid of humour withal, he was once heard to remark that it would be no bad thing if all the London slums were burned



down, for then his brother Duke, he of Nodland, to whom most of them belonged, would be obliged to

build new and better ones. But his Grace of Nodland, who frowned at this joke, had no difficulty in proving that Dukes are not bound to take the lead in sanitary progress until they are gently pushed thereto by public clamour. If Dukes innovated and did all the good they might do, how would they retain money sufficient to make a stand on the day when the public called upon them for some concession which it might not please them to grant?

Duke Nodland owns a large acreage of London ; for instance, including part of that busy district where newspapers are most conveniently published ; and he can do a good deal against any print displeasing to him, by turning its proprietors summarily out of his premises. He is also the owner of a market which is a scandal to the town, and has been so any time within living memory, from the filthy and unwholesome state in which it is kept, the law naturally giving his Grace authority over the lives and health of his fellow-subjects, so that he only resorts to poison. Yet who knows whether the Duke may not some day be called upon to give up these privileges, and that he may even think it prudent to do so, after much pressure?

His Grace of Heatherland, however, at present stood corrected, for he well knows the uses of money. Though his income be twenty times greater than is

needful for himself and his children, it is but common prudence to lay by and invest, so that children's children, cousins, nephews, and hangers-on, even to the fourth generation, may be prosperous folk, upholding the great House of Heatherland by the potency of gold. Why should not the Duke of Nodland act with equal prudence?

It was remarked by a shallow political essayist that the peers of England might have retained enormous power if they had systematically expended their money on objects of public good. They *have* retained enormous power, but it is precisely because they have been shrewd enough to keep their money in their own pockets. There are not wanting theorists who argue that rich men hold their incomes in trust for the general welfare; and if their lordships had been guileless enough to impoverish themselves in order to provide Great Britain with an additional number of museums, parks, open squares, and wholesome dwellings, it would only have been said that they had given with good grace, so as not to be forced to give by iron-handed Revolution.

The Duke of Heatherland, like the rest of his exalted order, is not in the least afraid of revolutions. He is hand-in-glove with illustrious revolutionists, and finds them the most tractable fellows alive. Garibaldi swears by him; so did many a refugee Frenchman in

the days of the Empire. While the mobs were tearing up the park railings at the epoch of the last Reform Bill, his Grace, who happened to be riding by at the time, was loudly cheered; for did he not belong to the great Whig party, for whose behoof all this waste of iron was being effected? and was he not the patron of Gladstone, and the benevolent friend of Bright? What can it signify to his Grace how many Reform Bills are passed, so long as they have no other effect upon himself than the last, which put his cousin into the Cabinet, brought another cousin into the peerage, promoted an old tutor to the episcopal bench, and girt the Garter about his own ducal leg?

More than one Tory could afford to be a Reformer at that price.



HEATHERLAND.

III.

POLITICAL LORDS.

Men like the Duke of Heatherland are not professed politicians. They leave such noisy work to Dukes who want money, to Dukes' heirs who want name, but more generally to younger sons and hangers-on.

Lord Pudden is a peer who has gone in steadily for politics as a paying profession. A descendant of a law-lord, and married to the penniless niece of a ducal couple, he had connections enough to push him on, but not money enough to live sumptuously without doing something for himself. Had he been very rich he would probably have been a spend-thrift, for he was born with a soft head; he was fond of praise, greetings in the market-place, women's homage, and good living. The coaching he got from prudent clerical tutors inflated his conceit not a little, but gave his mind a bent towards profitable employment. Plodding work at the University secured him a degree in honours, and from that moment his future was made.

Lord Pudden had only to show himself in the political arena, with his dull eyes and moony face,

to be immediately enlisted by the Liberal chiefs, who know the value of a solid young lord, willing to encrust himself in departmental work. Lord Pudden was at once appointed to an under-secretaryship, which any one among five hundred members, chosen at hazard from Parliament, could have filled better than himself; but in his own lustreless way he soon began to say and do things which a commoner dared not have done or said, and earned a lucrative reputation in consequence. The secret of a dry young lord's success consists in this, that sentiments which would be scouted as ridiculous, subversive, and impertinent if they came from a commoner are held to denote originality and intellectual enlightenment when uttered by a peer. The commoner who assails aristocratical institutions is made to spend a hard time of it; but the lord who sneers at his own order passes for a sensible fellow.

Political theories so mean that a grocer's apprentice would disavow them; a niggardliness with the public pence which causes all public work to be ill done; and a peace-at-any-price spirit, which will hear of no patriotic movement for the consolidation of the Empire or the protection of the weak,—these are the prominent characteristics of Lord Pudden's great good sense. When he stands up to answer a question in the House of Lords he mouths out cynical

aphorisms with the effrontery of a churl; if tackled about a departmental abuse, he quibbles as a county-court attorney would be ashamed to do. He is never put in the wrong; for he twists facts about like a hawker peddling cheap ribbons, and he dodges away from a straight attack like an eel. Nobody ever caught him giving way to a noble impulse, labouring to do good, or helping to remedy an injustice. His liberal spoutings are mere wind, which, having been blown like a gale from greater hearts than his own, passes through his tight lips with the squeaking noise of air through a keyhole. He is a feeble echo of resounding words, a medium for circulating party bosh, a Turk's head set up for the underlings of the opposite side to shy sticks at, his pate being so thick that there is no danger of its getting broken.

Lord Pudden, however, is a cunning fellow; else he could never have played his subordinate part to such perfection. Had he been born a few steps lower down the ladder he would have been content with a footman's place, without aiming at the butler's. Butlerships come to such as he in good time, when their hair is scanty and their wits have grown murky; if they try to push forward too fast they get turned out of the pantry.

Lord Pudden had the sense to divine that he must sing small under the leadership of the party

tenors and basses. He was a mere chorist, who, if indulged in a solo now and then, must take care not to pitch his voice above the normal diapason, and who must, above all things, hold the party music-book in his hand, to show that he was not piping anything of his own composition. If he had set up as a performer of original melodies he might, to be sure, have enjoyed a brief period of glory; for some of the howlers and yelpers out of doors might have pressed a conductor's bâton into his grasp, and made him a leader of such independent concerts as are held under a tree in Hyde Park. But from that time Lord Pudden would have been declared unfit for cabinet music, and his utter collapse a mere question of time.

Lord Pudden was not cut out for the part of a chieftain, and even had he been possessed of ten times more talent than Nature had allowed him, the fact of his being a peer would have debarred him from those prominent popular posts which devolve upon the younger sons of dukes in times of public commotion—men like the late Lord John Bustle and the existing Lord John Banners.

Who has not read of the prowess of these two Johns, and laughed with the good broad laugh which comedy excites? The one a Tory, the other a Whig, both were embodiments of those lively qualities which zoologists recognise in the bantam

cock. They strutted and crowed; they kicked up dust at each other; they fought for grain and ate bushels of it; they were a pair of as quarrelsome cocks as ever set a poultry-yard in a flutter; but on the whole John Bustle was a gamier chanticleer than John Banners.

Johnny Bustle was dubbed leader of the first Reform Bill agitation, and he did lead it, much as a cork leads a stream which carries it along topsyturvy. He was chosen because it was needful to have a Duke's son to give character to the movement; and also because it was essential that the peers who cast in their lot with the tagrag and bobtail should have a guarantee that they, and not the tagrag, were to reap all the profit of the movement. So the Reformers, having conquered, made Johnny Bustle a Secretary of State, and by and by Premier; and Johnny, looking on the horny-handed men who had laboured to hoist him so high, told them to rest and be thankful, whilst he parted all the spoils of victory among his kinsfolk and acquaintances. He forgot not a cousin or a nephew in this royal distribution, which was carried on with but few intermissions for six-and-thirty years. The Bustles and the Preyers, the Sillyoafes and the Conyngfishes, the De Brownes and the Whitey-Brownes, all forming part of the great plum-devour-



ing connection, were installed in every post where public moneys could be fingered. They became lords spiritual and temporal, commanders of armies and fleets, governors of colonies and ambassadors; they sucked the udders of the nation through every teat; nothing was done in Great Britain and her

dependencies but by them and for them; so that it seemed, in truth, as if the greatest empire in the world had been created to no other end than to make them all fat. As for the thinkers and workers, who had made the pulse of the nation beat at the name of Reform—the Tom Moores and the Sydney Smiths, the Leigh Hunts and the Landors—they were left to suck their thumbs in the shade. Tom Moore, however, had 300*l.* a year flung to him like a bone.

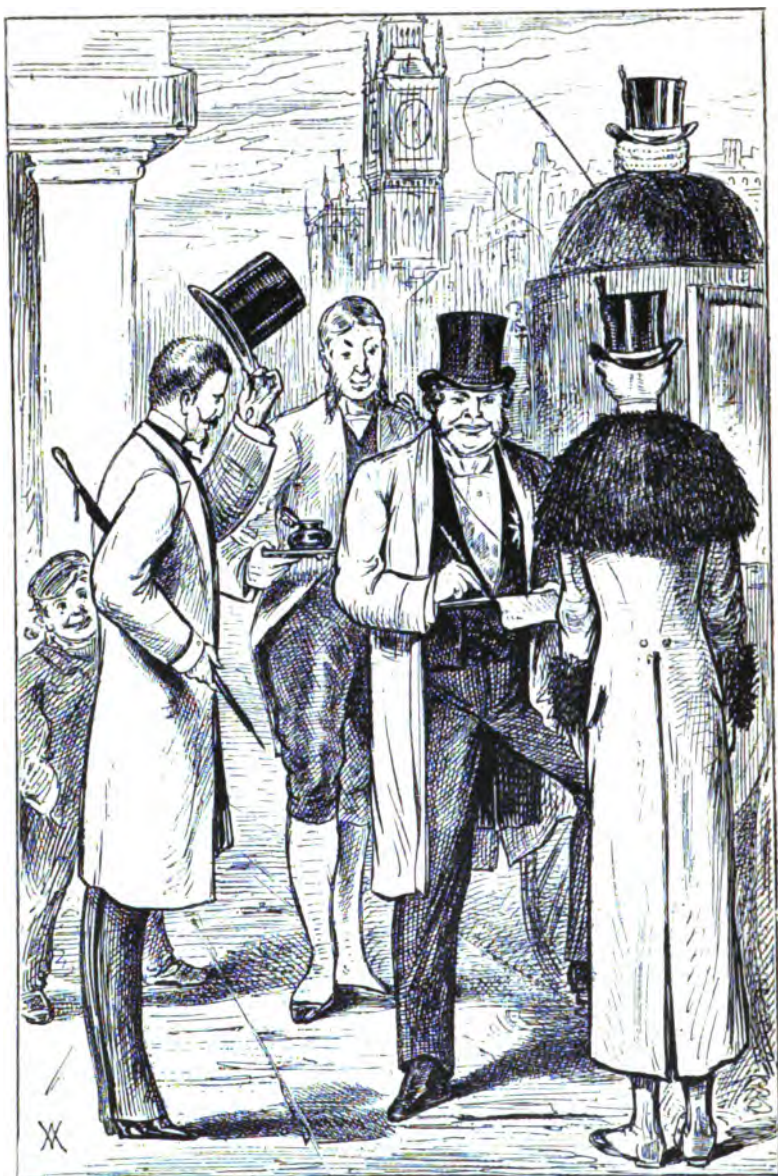
Meanwhile Johnny Banners had been at work on the other side, perspiring with all his might to hold up the big blue standard of the Tories in the fearful gale. Unlike the other John, he had not been elected to his office of flag-bearer; he had volunteered for it, crying, 'I am the only man to hold the thing high. Give it me!' He took it with both hands, and its mighty flaps knocked him down. He picked himself up, and looked a worthy figure, as he battled for a moment against the breeze, all his hair on end, and his mouth gasping inaudible war-cries. Finally, when the breeze upset him a second time, and it became evident that his muscles had no strength to uphold the flagstaff, he sat down to weep, and talked of becoming a monk. This is the same Johnny Banners who afterwards recovered from his despondency, was intrusted with the Cabinet office of looking after the public parks and statues, and



was eventually promoted to be Commander-in-Chief of the postmen at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

But this brings his lordship to the category of





SIGNING A TREATY ON THE WAY TO DINNER.

political old fogeys, a category which we will handle presently. Meanwhile, we have a few words to say about other great Political Lords, who, being neither Heatherlands nor Puddens, have even more to do with managing or mismanaging our affairs for us.

Among the Parliamentary Lords prominently in view is Earl Manville, who is a noble exemplification of the proverb, that it is better to be born lucky than rich. He has had everything that is worth having in the official way, even the refusal of the Premiership; and his career as a successful placeman will only end with his life. Not a man of any far-shining ability, but a person of singularly good sense, and a very round man. Easy and self-indulgent to a degree almost beyond belief, so that to get his signature to a treaty it was necessary on one occasion for the French Ambassador to dodge him; and he did what was required of him with one foot resting on the step of his carriage, in which he was going out to dinner. He was then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and M. Thiers wanted to be able to announce the actual signature of the treaty to the French Chamber on the same evening. It was, however, a matter of complete indifference to Lord Manville. He will not be bothered. He tells amusing stories to the Queen; but it may be observed that he is seldom



Minister in attendance on her Majesty at Balmoral, where the dinners are of dubious quality and amusement rare, while he himself has one of the best cooks in Europe. He has not the character of being a fast man, though he has rather loose and uncere-
monious ways, such as sitting astraddle across a

chair in the presence of ladies. Possibly the secret of his popularity is the geniality of his character, the plumpness of his aspect, and the fact that he is one of the best informed, and the least pedantic, men out.

Education he has none. He may have read a book, as Brummel once ate a pea, but it is doubtful. In no other country but ours would any one think of counting him in the ranks of eminent men; and in England, had he not been a peer he would never have been heard of beyond the precincts of a domestic circle, where he would have been liked for his kindness and easy nature. His natural place in society is that of a gentleman at large. He would have made a good country squire, and an equally good sleeping partner in an old-established business in town. He has a constitutional aversion to work.

It is pleasing to think of what a peerage can do for such a Briton. When only twenty years old he was appointed, without fuss or examination, to a rank which, in accordance with the rules of precedence, is superior to that of a colonel in the army. He was a member of Parliament at twenty-two, his father being still in the flesh as a peer and an Ambassador. Though he had never moved one step in the diplomatic service, he jumped at a bound from the post of junior attaché to that of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with a salary of fifteen

hundred a year, at the age of twenty-five. At thirty, on having succeeded to his title, he was made a member of the Royal Household and Master of the Buckhounds, also with a handsome salary and perquisites. He was raised to the dignity of Privy Councillor the same year, appointed one of the Commissioners of Railways (!) and a magistrate, having authority over the interests and characters of many of his fellow-subjects. At thirty-three he was named Vice-President of the Board of Trade, though knowing nothing whatever about trade, *and* Paymaster-General.

Subsequently a tiff between Prince Albert and Lord Palmerston made this very round and in-offensive man a Cabinet Minister and a principal Secretary of State, with a salary of 5000*l.* a year and patronage. He was then thirty-six. A year later he was appointed Lord President of the Council, an official who ranks immediately after the Lord Chancellor. In 1854 he was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and it was whispered that his lordship had become a considerable leaseholder under the Crown, whereat some murmurs. One month afterwards, also, the Earl, who was remarkable for his want of scholarship, was named a member of the Committee of Education. The following year he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the

Emperor of all the Russias, *and* Chancellor of the University of London. Next he was made a Knight of the Garter; and the University of Oxford, where he had never even passed his Little-go, solemnly conferred upon him the highest honour at its disposal, and gave him the degree of D.C.L.

Among the odds and ends he has picked up during his agreeable stroll through these happy hunting-grounds are the following very nice things. He is Constable of Dover Castle and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The emoluments of this agreeable sinecure used to be estimated at 4000*l.* a year for life in the time of Lord Manville's predecessor. They are now said to be less, or nothing; but I have never heard of a sinecure in noble hands falling off in value; and his lordship is not personally responsible for the statement that he enjoys less than those who have gone before him. Thus much is also certain, that whatever he may receive in hard cash for duties which are purely nominal, he is provided with one of the finest marine villas in the world at the national expense, and possesses a life interest in Walmer Castle, which nobody can deny.

Earl Manville has been not only Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but also Secretary of State for the Colonies, though he has never had any experience, or pretended to have any experience, of

Colonial affairs. He was, moreover, Plenipotentiary at the Conference of London in 1871, *and* a member of the Royal Commission to Paris in 1877-8.

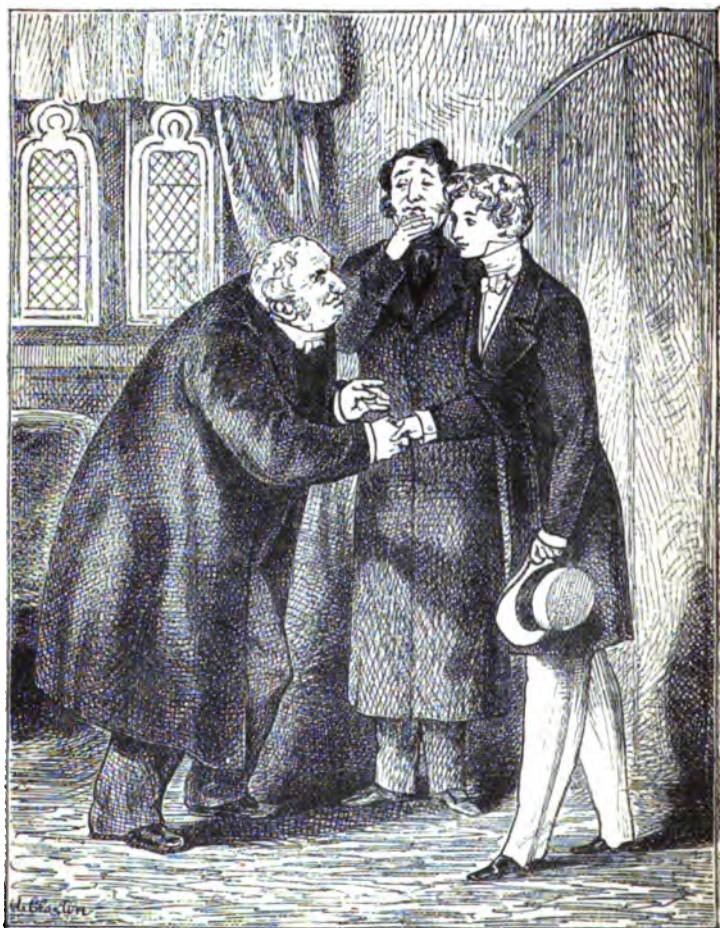
It may be noted, in passing, that this excellent nobleman has never said or done anything remarkable in the whole course of his life. His nickname among his intimates is 'Pussy,' and it is sometimes added that 'Pussy can scratch.' For the rest, he has passed his life in amusing himself without noise or scandal; and he owes all the honours and dignities which have devolved upon him to the charming accident that he is an Earl.

The Right Honourable Achan-Jericho-Smith, Earl of Bethaven, is a very different sort of person from the Noble Lord just mentioned. He was a surly ill-conditioned lad, with a furtive look, who early made his mark in society by a method rather unusual. The mode he selected for distinguishing himself was that of levying benevolences; and it became absolutely necessary to speed him from the most lord-loving school in the world. The head-master waited on his father (who damned him heartily for his impudence), and humbly protested that there was no help for it. He even shed tears, so great was his reverence for the Peerage. But the thing had got wind. Bethaven (who was then Lord Babylon) had

been too generous with his schoolfellows' pocket-money, and the total amount of the involuntary contributions he had drawn from them exceeded a hundred pounds. The thing had, therefore, gone too far to be hushed up; but it is an interesting example of our national lord-worship that many of the hopeful young gentlemen (as they loved to be called) knew that Babylon put communistic theories into practice, but 'let him go on, because they were in the same set, and it seemed as if they knew him at home.'

Even these little Britons were prepared to pay for a lord's acquaintance; and the head-master, who was held responsible for Babylon's abrupt departure, received threatening and furious letters from all parts of the country. Several of them were shown to this writer; and certainly their language was strong. One correspondent, dating from Cumberland, compared him to Richard III.; another—probably a lady, from the handwriting—called him an 'ogre,' which she spelt, possibly by a *lapsus calami*, 'oger.' However, it does not hurt anybody to be called names; and it does hurt a company of boys to have a 'squire of the night's body' among them; so the head-master's decision took effect. Of course, another high-class school was eager to receive the youthful misdemeanant; for his father had a great deal of Church and miscellaneous patronage.

The boy, also, had good abilities of a certain sort ; and being of a shy surly disposition, he spent most of his time with books. As his father, however, was Chancellor of Wycliffe University, it was not thought prudent to enter him there ; and he was sent to



Newton, where, being aided by the natural deference to rank which is so praiseworthy a characteristic of our college dons, he took a first class in classics.

It was not considered expedient to bring forward Lord Babylon very early. A strange ill-luck seemed to haunt him. The Duchess of Dillwater lost a bracelet after dining in his company. Lady Tabitha Trumpington, who had a tongue, lost her jewel-case while staying at the ancestral seat of the Bethavens, and had to be comforted with hard cash. At last there was a burglary in his own father's house, and a then famous detective was summoned, upon which Lord Babylon started on his travels.

He went to America, where an odd adventure befell him. Meeting one day a west-country man who was very curious, the following conversation took place between them:

American (*loquitur*): 'How do you get your living now? You don't look up to much, you don't, thar now.'

Lord Babylon, with some hauteur: 'I have an allowance from my father, the Earl of Bethaven.'

A. 'And who's he?'

L. B., with still more hauteur: 'An English peer.'

A., with a keen look: 'Ah, but suppose he was to bust up, what would you do then?'

Happily for Great Britain's glory, our sublime customs of primogeniture and entail prevent any danger of a noble Earl busting up, and to this hour the necessity of personally earning a sixpence has never presented itself to Lord Babylon. If it did, he would probably reply that he had no need to earn it. At twenty-five he came home attended by a lady of the French nation, and several small children. Had he been plain Mr. Smith, he would not probably have been admitted as a guest into any decorous English, still less into any decorous Scotch, home. Let us now consider what was done for him, because he had a handle to his name, and was heir to a peerage.

Before his return to England he had been elected a member of Parliament, being then twenty-two years old. His constituents could know nothing about him, save that he was an Earl's son, and held eccentric opinions on the law of personal property. My lord treated them as they deserved. After a maiden speech on molasses (demonstrated to be the question of the age), he set off for the East to amuse himself in his own way. To induce him once more to bless England with his presence, he was appointed to a high office, on the steps of the Cabinet, with a salary of 1500*l.* a year. About a couple of months after he had been gazetted, he condescended to appear in

Downing-street. Father and son were at this time dividing 6500*l.* a year of public money between them. The figures afterwards rose to 10,000*l.*, for the British public showed a touching fidelity to the house of Jericho-Smith. Month after month society smiled or shrugged its shoulders at some new escapade of Babylon's, and each escapade was followed by the grant of a new dignity to the hero of the sorriest anecdotes which ever illustrated the history of the peerage.

Honours were heaped up over his dishonours:—if, happily, they might only hide them. Our oligarchy had chosen its part. He was one of them, and should be not only protected, but glorified. Half measures in his case were impossible; and recourse was unflinchingly had to heroic measures. He was proclaimed to be a man of genius. All of a sudden the newspapers began to sing his praises with a suspicious alacrity; but simple Britons read and believed. They applauded when the greatest statesman of the time asked Babylon (then of the ripe age of twenty-nine) to be his colleague at a moment big with the fate of the country; and thenceforth nothing was considered too good for a man who had never shown spirit or forethought, eloquence or wit. He was set over all the pro-consulates of the Empire; he was pitted against Bismarck and Gortschakoff; he

was made trustee of national treasures, and member of commissions on every subject under the sun. He has meddled with the organisation of our army and our universities, with our sanitary regulations and our mercantile law. To say that he has muddled would be but expressing half the truth.

Lord Bethaven spends no end of time with Blue-books, but his mind is of an incurably indolent turn. When he meets a difficulty, he passes it over, and can always find twenty reasons for doing nothing. His party was long in opposition; and, as his duties then consisted in finding fault with the acts of others, which is always easy work, his incapacity long escaped observation. At length he was placed in a position of real responsibility and power, and broke down completely. England was well-nigh involved in his fall. His own kinsman upbraided him in Parliament with his cowardice, and, in a studied insult, compared him to the infamous Titus Oates, the least veracious character of whom English annals make mention.

Not only has he proved himself an inefficient Minister. His conduct in office has suggested doubts as to whether his reasoning faculties were in proper working order. When publicly called to account before our judges, on charges affecting his personal probity, he set complaint at defiance by demurring

on the ground of privilege to the jurisdiction of our law-courts. Nay, more, when the Queen's Majesty personally interceded with him in favour of a public servant whom he had notoriously wronged while in office, he turned the prerogative of the Sovereign into mockery.

And yet he does well to be cynically contemptuous of the dictates of justice and loyalty. The judges take his part. The Sovereign is compelled to offer him the Garter, that my lord may have the satisfaction of refusing it. Such baubles may suit a Wellington or a Palmerston; Bethaven is above them. He never mingles in the sports or pastimes of men of his own rank. He does not hunt or shoot. He was never a cricketer, and he runs away from the society of women. It was noticed, when he last held the seals of office, that he resigned his place as soon as the work thrown upon him put his sanity thoroughly to the test. So long as he could dawdle over unimportant business, leaving the rest to his underlings, power had charms—ineffable charms—for him; but the instant he got into difficulties, which obliged him to think and to act, he caught fright and bolted from the Ministry.

It has been estimated that the income of Lord Bethaven, from land alone, is 600,000*l.* a year. He is said to spend over 10,000*l.* annually in advertising

himself, and is therefore frequently designated as the coming Premier. But he is astute enough in his madness to keep aloof from the premiership so long as there is any danger of incurring troublesome responsibilities with it. He will perhaps be set up one day as the nominal leader of a Coalition Ministry of 'all the talents.' It needs only a figure-head for such a post, and a thickly gilt figure-head does better than any other.

The most conspicuous figure of the House of Lords, within recent memory, was the Earl of Sparklemoor, long time known as Mr. Benjudah. There was a strong melodramatic flavour about all he did or said. His conduct was a riddle to the foolish, a subject of interest or amusement to the wise. He presented the strange sight of a gifted and imaginative man, of quick feelings and faithful affections, who had succeeded in English public life, but who was totally devoid of sympathy with our national character, and who had a contempt which he did not care to conceal for our habitual modes of thought and action. He was in many respects a sublime dreamer, a man of high authoritative ways, a Strafford, not a Russell; and he considered himself rather the Grand Vizier of an Eastern potentate than the responsible servant of a bustling and commonplace democracy.

Yet he died the most popular man in England, the favourite of the Court, the idol of the City, and so beloved by the people that Englishmen offered to have their blood transfused into his veins when his pulse waxed feeble, that a part of their very lives might lengthen his, were it but for a single day. No tribute so honest and glorious was ever before offered to a statesman in any country; nevertheless, there are still doubters who question whether he was ever really in earnest during the whole of his political career.

Many who saw him walk stooping to his seat in the House, with a sardonic smile on his lips, as if he were relishing a secret joke suggested by the platitudes of some prosy Whig orator, declared that he had the face of Old Nick. His resemblance to a venerable pawnbroker in go-to-synagogue attire was certainly remarkable, especially when he had his hat on. Some pious peers looked upon him with an aversion which they would have been shy to confess, but which troubled their consciences. He used to produce the same effect upon the Quakers and Methodists in the House of Commons. They would nudge one another and exchange piteous glances when he rose to chastise them with that scorpion tongue of his, whose stings have often left unhealing wounds. For 'Is this man not a Jew?' they argued. 'And, what is worse, a Jew who, as it is said, became renegade

to the faith of his fathers, merely that he might not belong to a religion which would have placed him under social disadvantages? So, in shocking truth, he has no religion at all; yet this is the political juggler who for years has led the Church and State party; and now sits the acknowledged, trusted champion of a Protestant aristocracy, after having been the esteemed Prime Minister of a Protestant Queen.'

There is enough in such thoughts to make earnest Nonconformists shiver; but the honest Christian hatred which they cherished towards Lord Sparkle-moor came also of the undisguised contempt which he presumed to entertain for *them*. He exposed their evil malignity, enviousness, uncharitableness, their want of brains and tact, their hypocrisies and corrupt ambition, as no other man could have done or would have dared to do. He sprinkled ridicule upon them like vinegar, and covered their mouths with pitch-plasters. That once obstreperous person Mr. Bright might have risen up to be a party leader but for him; as it was, Mr. Benjudah's ruthless exposures of his illiterate bumptiousness, exaggerations, and amazing ignorance compelled the disgusted Quaker to begin learning history at an age when men have generally done with school-books. Mr. Chamberlain had been crowing very hard on his Birming-

ham eminence before he strutted into the poultry-yard at St. Stephen's; but one encounter with the Tory chanticleer sent him sore and crestfallen into a corner, whence he has only dared to protrude his diminished comb at cautious intervals ever since. Sir William Harcourt, who has not quite the guilelessness of the dove, early took care to make a friend of Mr. Benjudah. He sparred with him at times in an amicable way, but never showed temper or impertinence in these encounters; on the contrary, he often expressed, in somewhat lively terms, his admiration for that brilliant master of irony, whose thrusts he feared, and by thus humbling himself earned a claim to good-natured forbearance. A wind-bag must needs avoid running amuck at a stiletto.

The Tory party accepted Mr. Benjudah's leadership because he compelled them to do so by his superiority. It was not the allegiance of love, but that of fear, which was given to the 'jewelled coxcomb in ringlets,' who had the combative courage of a bantam, and always selected the strongest enemies for his fierce onslaughts. No man who had raised a laugh against Mr. Benjudah once could do so a second time with any sense of comfort, unless, indeed, he were a person too lowly to merit the honour of reprisals. But what marvel is it that

Mr. Benjudah should have exercised himself with invective and irony, as some of his Venetian ancestors may have done with the rapier and dagger? They were his only weapons; for in the rowdy battles of politics a man's genius counts for little if it be not backed with personal courage and a keen ambition. Genius may serve a man as a trumpet to sound a charge with; but unless the trumpeter can make use of his arms as well as of his instrument of music, he stands a good chance of being overlooked when the spoils of victory come to be divided. Now it was never Mr. Benjudah's purpose to go *toot-tooting* for nothing.

One of the characters in *Vivian Grey* says to the hero of that novel: 'Make them fear you, and they will kiss your feet. There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour.' The truth of this remark has often been proved at the expense of those communities for whose benefit politics are supposed to be conducted by placemen anxious only to benefit themselves. Party government in England is a disorderly system, by which two factions, separated by no very vital differences of opinion, struggle for power by pompous words and ignoble acts. Tories and Liberals, pelting one another with fragments of the Constitution, ac-

ording as it may serve their purpose, have none of them, as a rule, any principles which they will stand by to the death. The Tories know very well that, when once any innovation has been taken up as a party question by the Liberals, its enactment is only a question of time, and of short time; and the Liberals know very well that their only means of keeping the Tories unpopular, and of ousting them from office when they occasionally get there, is by recklessly attacking institutions which in former times they have admired and defended. No institution is safe, and no consistency of principle is possible, with such a loose game. The Tories, when they oppose some crude measure suddenly started by their opponents, are threatened with all the fury of an agitated rabble if they resist; whereas, if they surrender, or take up one of the Liberal measures by way of amending it, they are savagely taunted with having betrayed their principles.

Under such circumstances, a man who is not tied to any particular party by family associations may fairly tack himself to what faction will best serve his interests; and if he makes a mistake in his first choice, there is no reason in the world, so far as the precedents of political morality hold good, why he should not go over to his former rivals. Mr. Ben-judah, at the outset of his career, when still a very

young man, gave himself out as a Reformer; but, finding he was not likely to make rapid progress in the ranks of a party which is always overstocked with struggling adventurers, he joined the Tories, who seemed more disposed to appreciate his genius and to value his services; and he has stuck to them through good and evil fortune ever afterwards, that is, for nearly forty-five years.

His latter-day rival, the hysterical Mr. Paradyse, has never shown such consistency of conduct or such fortitude in adversity; and yet, by a ludicrous irony of fortune, he has won a character as the better moralist of the two. Mr. Paradyse never held an opinion which he would not recant when it served his ambition to do so. He has constantly let himself be hurried onward, that he might seem to keep the lead of the men who were pushing him, and get first into Downing-street when the loaves and fishes were going to be parted. A more self-seeking statesman never existed; but then, in a religious country, he was saved from failure by his assumption of the most earnest sanctimoniousness. Pronouncing sonorous homilies; talking of conscience and conversions, which conversions always came just at the right moment to bring him into office; reading the Sunday lessons in a country church, whilst his heart overflowed with envy and uncharitableness to

all mankind who in any way thwarted his personal aims—thus did Mr. Paradyse win honour from a section of the British public. He used the Bible as his stepping-stool, and heaped up tracts when he wanted to climb still higher. But Mr. Benjudah could not have adopted these droll antics, even had he tried it. He was unscrupulous too, but his unscrupulousness was of a different order. In matters of religion he was, perhaps, sincerer than his antagonist; for he always had a mysterious belief in the governance of the world by Divine agencies, and a fine insight into the benefits which mankind has at different times derived from the ascendancy of a strong Church, which does not mean the ascendancy of hundreds of howling sects.

The truth is, Lord Sparklemoor was an Italian Jew, brought up in England, who had passed through an attorney's office. His earliest education included the queer experiences of a Dublin money-lender; and he was just what might have been expected under such conditions—an extremely sharp customer. His mind was Italian, a tricky meretricious mind. His impudence was English, and he was very impudent. His mental endowments were not to be compared with those of the great intellects inspired by the great hearts of noble Italians. His tastes were rather of the courier or *laquais*



de place order, fond of gold-laced caps and false glitter of every kind, and naturally inclined to what is gaudy and deceitful. So in like manner his impudence was not the cool effrontery of a Chesterfield or Palmerston, both extremely impu-

dent men. It was that of Wilkes, altogether of a lower and coarser sort. Mr. Benjudah's sauciness seemed always put on for show, and came from his tongue only, not from his mind. He would fawn one day upon a man whom he had virulently abused but a little while before; because he never in his heart despised any one who was powerful, and might possibly be of use to him. His genuine contempt was all for the weak and foolish, though he knew that fools have their uses too, and he often used them.

Lord Sparklemoor owed most of his success to these *laquais de place* qualities. He was sincerely obsequious to rank and titles, and made himself both useful and agreeable to several scions of great houses. Such men really govern England, and he could not have done without them. He charmed them and their followers by repeating their favourite platitudes in fluent highly-coloured language. The same trick is played every day upon respectable British families by the smooth-tongued couriers who have charge of them. And it is a trick which must always pay so long as the rich and indolent love to be flattered. Then Mr. Benjudah, when he had attracted high-born young men by his plausibility, wormed secrets out of them, extracted pledges in unguarded moments, and inspired terror

in their minds ever afterwards. A noble Duke, writing to his younger son, alluded to the 'pernicious sorcery' which Mr. Benjudah seemed to have exercised over the latter; and a young nobleman, writing to his father, said, 'I allowed myself to slip like a toy into Benjudah's hands, and now he holds me.' On the other hand, Mr. Benjudah had a Jew's gratitude for services rendered, and a Jew's remembrance of injuries. Those who served him well he never forgot, nor those who crossed him either.

His service was the best that England has ever offered to ambition or to greed. No previous Minister had ventured to bestow rewards so various and splendid on his personal adherents. What a gorgeous list can be made with but a few of them! He gave an Imperial crown, constant homage, and real power in return for the tardy favour of his Sovereign; he provided the most magnificent pageant in our history for the Heir to the Throne; he distributed profuse gifts and eloquent praises among all the Royal Family. He had rich sops always ready for approved courtiers. He conferred a dukedom on a fashionable acquaintance who had pleased him; a Garter upon a refractory colleague who had made absolute submission to him. He assigned eighty-four thousand pounds in one lump to his bankers as commission on a state financial transaction; he

threw twelve thousand pounds a year to each of a pair of insignificant men-of-all-work—poor creatures both of them, and mere detrimental hangers-on to the skirts of his greatness; he paid a comfortable income for an opportune vote at an election for a small borough; and first set the generous precedent of bestowing a peerage on his private secretary. He made the fortunes of his favourites as with the wand of an enchanter; and while the paths of his followers were rendered pleasant, politicians ventured upon slippery ground indeed who came athwart him. Gentleman Malmesbury, old gentlewoman Smallpole, and poor daft Lord Furby, with the bee in his bonnet, tumbled headlong, and vanished out of public sight that way.

The wonder, therefore, is, not that he succeeded in obtaining such objects as he proposed to himself—place and pay, titles and authority. It would have been a marvel had he failed to do so. If it be objected that he did not climb to the top of the social and official tree by orthodox methods, one must remember that Mr. Benjudah could not afford to play the game of politics with the chivalrous courtesy of the high-born party-man, such as one finds in books rather than in real life. He was bound to win or to give it up. He could not afford to wait. He was thirty-five before he made a rich marriage, and was

by that time deeply and dangerously in debt. It is said that he had pawned some of his influence to come by promising to obtain a government appointment for somebody who had lent him money. At any rate, he had been leading a gay and somewhat dissipated life, without having very safe sources of income. His novels bear traces of his shifts and his longings. No prescient tailor like the Mr. Vigo of *Endymion* dressed him on credit; and his clothes cost him a deal of money. He also had all the luxurious fancies, the secret hunger after wealth, which run in the blood of his race.

It must be remarked, however, that when once Mr. Benjudah had married well, and was secure from want, he exhibited his Jewish instincts unmistakably by living with almost ridiculous parsimony. The Jew is ostentatious, but thrifty at the same time. He freely spends the pounds which may serve him to show-off, but is frugal of the pence which disappear unnoticed. So while Mr. Benjudah did not hesitate to be extravagant in personal adornment and in entertainments where he received the great, he would have but one fire in his house, to save coal; and forbade the servants to light the lamp in the hall when no visitors were expected, that the gas might not be consumed unprofitably. He saved money, and invested it well. A lucky inheritance put him

in possession of a landed estate. At a critical point in his fortunes he unexpectedly received fifty thousand pounds in money. The objects of a man's ambition become vastly easier of attainment with such helps. He became rich, without appearing to be so; for he gave little away, so that nobody might be tempted to trumpet his bounties and bring beggars to his door. He loved high-priced wines (in moderation) and consummate cookery as well as any man, and did ample honour to such things when dining out; but at home his fare was of the simplest. He would have thought it stupid to uncork a bottle of Château Lafitte for his own refreshment.

Thus here are all the characteristics of the wondrous Hebrew people, who can put a rein on such propensities as would lead them nowhither; and they are characteristics which would insure success in any walk of life. Courage, caution, shrewdness, culture, wealth; a brilliant imagination, cool judgment to keep it in check; a handsome presence, a silvery tongue, and dauntless self-confidence. What more can a man desire to fight and win with? If Mr. Benjudah had started as a banker, lawyer, or clergyman, he could not, with such talents as Nature gave him, have done otherwise than prosper. Few men have owed so much to Nature and so little to

Fortune as he. He created opportunities, and swiftly caught all that came within his reach; but they came slowly and seldom. He had to slave for nearly forty years in the House of Commons before he became Prime Minister with effective power; and



by that time much of his early force and health were gone. Then, too, Nemesis threw across his path, to mar his schemes and rob him of the fruit of his victories, his noisy enemy, Mr. Paradyse.

It is a thousand pities for England that Lord Sparklemoor did not come to power when in the prime of life, and remain in office for years. This might have been his fate under a monarchy really monarchical, or under a Republican democracy; and England would have derived much advantage from being governed by a man who understood the art of ruling men better than any politician of his time. It was a ludicrous result of our party-government system that the brilliant orator and statesman, versed in all the wiles of statecraft, should have had to fritter away his talents for years and years in profitless opposition, whilst repeated innings of power should have fallen to the hysteric, incompetent Mr. Paradyse, who has never been able to govern his own temper, much less to lead a party or rule a nation. Under the peevish wayward rule of this so-called Liberal chieftain all institutions of the realm have fallen into discredit, and the House of Commons most of all. Queen, Lords, Church, Corporations, have all been made to feel that they exist only on sufferance, till it may please Mr. Paradyse to egg on the mobs against them; and meanwhile the Lower House of

Parliament, having no firm hand to control it with a dignity which need not have excluded freedom, has had to submit to the disgrace of Speaker's *coups d'état* and to wholesale gaggings and expulsions of its members.

Under the governance of such a man as Lord Sparklemoor neither England nor Liberalism would have fallen into such scrapes and disrepute. It matters nothing that his lordship had faults; his qualities were those of a governing mind. He knew what pleases men, what moves them; what aims should be those of a great nation; and what achievements are within the power of a strong one. He was both supple and firm, ingenious and patient. His policy would have been found economical, if it could have had a fair trial, because it would have spared Europe the wars which Mr. Paradyse has caused again and again, by showing his unwillingness to fight. It would have been a more elevating policy, too, as regards the tone of thought of the nation, because the ethics of the Liverpool counting-house, which Mr. Paradyse has so successfully infused into Liberal politics, have served to make the people at once sly and base, sceptical and cynical. To hear an average Liberal politician talk of national interests or grandeur nowadays is like hearing an ignorant pedlar state his opinion about a pyramid: 'What is the use of it?

What will it fetch? To what end this waste of stone and bricks?' Lord Sparklemoor never talked in this strain about a pyramid.

Mr. Paradyse would have been fine as an Opposition leader, with some laws against treason-sedition to keep him in gentle curb, and with Mr. Benjudah at the helm of affairs. But, as the foregoing lines show, this proper apportionment of positions was denied to the two men by reason of England's very peculiar and impractical system of government. Mr. Benjudah could not, in a few years, win the public confidence necessary to make him a ruler. A peer's son, with but half the genius he possessed, could have become Prime Minister at twenty-five; but the 'Jew boy's' origin stood against him, and dogged him with reproach through the whole of his career even to its close.

This must be repeated, and repeated with the aggravating circumstance, that those who have abused Lord Sparklemoor most on account of his ancestors' religion are the men who most loudly use religious toleration as a party cry. The hubbub about his lordship's unscrupulousness is all mere moonshine; for it cannot be contended that Pitt, Palmerston, or Melbourne were men of very nice scruples; and yet an admiring nation chose to obey them when alive and to honour them when dead. As to the scru-

pulousness of Mr. Paradyse, an opinion has already been given on it.

It is probable, however, that now Lord Sparklemoor is gone he will get honour too. His career will be looked upon as an example, at once mysterious and striking, of what perseverance can do. England has always been prone to revere men who climbed to high mountain-tops, even though they did little on their way thither beyond climbing; and not much either when they got to the summit, except wave a flag and laugh in the faces of those who had predicted failure. In the privacy of his meditations, Lord Sparklemoor was probably satisfied enough with what he succeeded in accomplishing; and perhaps thought he had not played out his last card. The embarrassments of his enemies must have caused him some delight, because, as they had never been generous to him, he had no reason to feel any sympathy for them. He was, after all, still much like an alien grandee among a people whom he never much loved—an Alberoni, a Mazarin—a man who has spited his foes by succeeding, and who, even after his falls, remained enigmatical and terrifying. There must have been something in Lord Sparklemoor's mere smile to make Mr. Paradyse wince with a self-consciousness of inferiority. The latter may well have said of the former, 'If I had his cool genius!'

and the former of the latter, 'If I had but his opportunities!'

Never had a man better chance of doing something worthy in the sight of God and man to be done than Lord Wreckworth. His very presence contributed something to his advantages, for he looked the best type of a nobleman—handsome, gracious, and well mannered according to the English standard, which measures by kind bluntness rather than by polish. He had been trained, too, in politics, was a skilful debater, and a consummate master of 'pointless' invective. He could both persuade those who were on his side already, and overawe men of feeble talking powers. No man's smile was more winning than that of Robert Neville; and few cared to advance within reach of his mordant sarcasm. He had no need of a peerage, and would have obtained as good a place in front without it, though not so quickly. He had won his spurs in parliamentary warfare long before he became a Marquis; and as his nominal father had reasons for keeping him at a distance, he got most of his bread and all his butter from the newspapers. It was he who first made the *Saturday Review* a power, and he has always had an active hand in the press.

He seemed, therefore, very early marked out for



distinction ; and when he succeeded to the marquise-ate, about a dozen years ago, he became immediately one of the most notable men in England.

Though not of the ancient Neville blood, he came of a good stock by his mother's side, and gave early proof of an inborn aptitude for public business. All he had to do for his country and his fame was to be honest and true ; but here was the hitch. He was a crooked-minded man, incapable of looking straight before him.

He had, in fact, a moral squint. When required to act fairly, he first shirked the question before him, and then, if he could not get clear away from it, took to official rigmarole. There was no such thing as a plain 'yes' or 'no,' or an intelligible reason, to be got out of him. When worsted in an argument, instead of candidly allowing himself to be convinced, he resorted to dogged silence.

He had the second rank in the peerage, which he might at any moment, during his tenure of office, have converted into the first. He had an ample fortune, even for a man of his rank, and had made it larger by methods which need not be here discussed ; he held unquestioned power, had an unblemished private character, and a large section of honest gentlemen looked upon him as the 'Hope of England.' Yet he stooped to very pitiful chicaneries to avoid doing right ; and he jobbed. He bestowed one of the great viceroysalties on a dolt and something worse, for no other reason save that he held prominent rank

in the Peerage. He did so in spite of all protest, and with a full knowledge of his nominee.

An awful famine and a revolt followed this abuse of patronage. The Governor left the famine to take care of itself, merely writing an ungrammatical letter to the Lord Mayor about it; and under his stupid maladministration people died of hunger in tens of thousands. His Excellency also went to look personally after the revolt with a horse and gig; but could make nothing of it; and the fairest province of the empire, committed to his trust and care, became a scene of disorder and misery, entailing a waste of many millions of money. The Governor also sold many of the art-treasures in his government for old metal; and, in short, his behaviour became so crying a public scandal, as to suggest the question whether the place he filled should not be abolished, which might have been a means of getting rid of him.

After having betrayed the public trust committed to him so signally in one Government office, Marquis Wreckworth passed to the control of continental affairs, and again behaved with equal caprice and want of principle. He never appointed or promoted one single man of energy or ability; and even the tools he found readiest to his hand were employed or advanced for unintelligible considerations. His negotiations with

foreign Powers and his dealings with Parliament recalled the days of Castlereagh, who frankly avowed that he accepted sham assurances from other countries in order to throw dust in the eyes of the House of Commons; and it came to be a generally-accepted maxim, that whatever might be the truth about any case before the public in which this Marquis was mixed up, it was not to be gathered from the most solemn official declarations.

‘The man is demented!’ said one who had felt a warm friendship for this Robert Neville, and saw with sorrow the ruin he was making of his reputation.

‘It is very possible,’ replied a Whig wirepuller dryly; ‘he has been bit by Dizzy.’

It is to be deplored that the Conservative peers should have chosen Marquis Wreckworth their leader, because a leader who cannot possess the confidence of any rational man among them will have but few and half-hearted followers, while impartial lookers-on must plainly foresee that nothing but confusion to Conservative councils can come of the arrangement.

Moreover, Lord Wreckworth has been already tried and found wanting. As Chancellor of Oxbridge he has large and uncontrolled powers; but with the exception of having arbitrarily conferred the highest degree the University can bestow, on a personal

adherent, he has done nothing. Not an abuse has ever been abolished, not an improvement begun under his direction.

Lord Maunder is heir to estates in fourteen counties; and what estates! More than one Crown Prince would be glad to change places with him, and enjoy his splendid expectations, to say nothing of the handsome fortune he already possesses. His houses are palaces; his lands are among the fairest in Britain. Of course he does not care about politics, and makes no secret of his good-humoured contempt for things in general. A lazy supercilious personage is Lord Maunder, and, therefore, he has been long since chosen leader of the Progress party in England. The choice is a wise one, for they do not wish to progress very far; and if they had a man really in earnest for their captain no one knows what might happen.

Lord Maunder took up politics as other Noble Lords take up the turf or Melton—for an amusement. He liked London life; and the nonsense going on in the House of Commons entertained him when he was in the humour for it. He took office, too, not because he cared to be bored by a posse of permanent official persons, always bent on having him perpetrate some abominable job, or defend some abuse which weighed heavily on their fellow-subjects,



but because he knew a very agreeable woman who had said to him, 'Why are you not in the Cabinet?' 'Ah!' replied Lord Maunder, 'why not? Hang it,

Lottie, you have given me an idea. Perhaps it will be good fun.'

Whether his lordship has found it good fun or otherwise is not generally known; but probably he has got as much excitement out of it as he would have had out of any other game. It is a queer game, too, for a man of honour; and nothing has ever been whispered at the clubs against Maunder's private character. He is rather a heavy sort of nobleman, with a negro underlip and a narrow head; but he is said to be a very good fellow, easy-tempered, companionable, not quick of comprehension, indeed, but pleasant and inoffensive. Needless to add that, with such qualifications, he has already refused the Premiership, and that it will certainly be offered to him again.

I once heard this illustrious, long-descended, large-acred nobleman make a short speech on a simple question of right and wrong. It was reported in the newspaper record of parliamentary debates, and it occupied only twenty-three lines of ordinary print; but it contained twenty-seven distinct mis-statements. I refreshed my memory next day by the perusal of his lordship's oratory, and counted up his deviations from the strict line of accuracy one by one till they reached the total above mentioned.

Of course his statement was official, and there-

fore of privileged elasticity, and the facts (!) were supplied to him quite hot from the department over which he presided, which was the War Office; moreover the subject at issue was the very shocking case of a lieutenant-colonel who had spoken the truth about a lord. But why should a long-descended large-acred nobleman, who will one day be a Duke if he lives long enough, and should at least be a man of honour at all times, consent to fib by the yard to defend departmental shortcomings? One would really like to know, at this time of day, why public opinion tolerates, in Cabinet Ministers, behaviour which would subject a man to personal restraint and a regulation dietary if he ventured on it in a police-court. Parliament is the highest court of appeal in the country; why, then, is its procedure so utterly unreliable that justice is perpetually burlesqued in it? Is it absolutely necessary for Imperial interests that, however upright and honourable a person may be in private life, he must become a knave, without probity or feeling, from the moment that he is made a responsible member of her Majesty's Government; and that his alleged responsibility should be one of the most obsolete of our constitutional fictions?

A commonplace fellow, half pettifogger, half

mountebank, who never said or did one notable thing in the whole course of his life, can, nevertheless, make a snug thing out of a dukedom. Duke Scampington has received about a hundred thousand pounds sterling of public money, within these last few years. He has been lodged free in a palace; he has been lighted, warmed, and attended, all at the national expense. See, also, what other good things have been given to him by an admiring country. After holding various well-paid subordinate posts, mostly sinecures, he was appointed to Cabinet office. Then, although nobody could possibly pretend that he had the smallest administrative experience, he was placed in supreme charge of a department which has to deal with wider and more complicated interests than any other in the world. And, as though this were not enough to recompense him for being a Duke, he was named Lord Lieutenant of his county, a magistrate with the power of appointing other magistrates, and a full-blown Colonel of cavalry, with pay and allowances, though it is a standing joke in his regiment that he cannot sit on horseback, and hardly knows a sword from an umbrella. Afterwards he was decorated with the broad ribbon of an Order of Knighthood instituted for conspicuous merit, and sent to rule over an important dependency, at a proper distance from criticism, and for

not discharging his duties he received a princely income, exclusive of perquisites. All this, my masters, and more, because he is titular Duke of Scampington.

Now, seeing that his titular dukedom has done so much for him, it is surely reasonable to ask what he has done for his titular dukedom. He began life by adroitly persuading his father out of a life interest in the ducal estates, upon a specific promise to resettle them when certain charges had been paid off. When his father had honestly done his part to satisfy the claims, which had been accumulating during two generations, the present Duke held fast on to the land, and repudiated every claim from which it was practicable to escape. He managed the business, too, through a very hard and sharp attorney, who had influence with a powerful section of the press, and by and by it was wafted abroad that the father was a scoundrel and the son a Phoenix.

It was a cruel thing to see the kind-hearted, chivalrous old nobleman, who had sacrificed every vestige of property he had in the world to pay what he owed to the uttermost farthing, most forlorn, most destitute. Many members of the Carlton Club, which was his only home, will remember the proud melancholy figure of the ruined peer. His coat and hat were very shabby; he had holes in his gloves, and even sometimes in his boots. His shirt was frayed at

the edges. He had been literally turned out of house and home by his son, who had given his servant orders that he was not to be admitted when he called. 'He is only to be talked to with a stick,' the old man used to say sadly, 'and my arm is now too feeble to chastise him.' One of the creditors, however, hearing these words, turned them over in his own mind, and put the advice into practice. Ultimately the honest old Duke died of shame, mortification, and want, in a single room at an hotel. He had changed characters with his son, and the world despised him. The present Scampington would not even pay his burial expenses, and set his executor at defiance.

To be sure the thing was neatly done between the present Scampington and his attorney. He saved the ducal estates, which are now entailed on him and his successors, so that no man can touch them; and has so managed his affairs that he has become the wealthiest Duke of his line. A very rich man, and a very mean and selfish man too, who has plenty of money, but will part with none of it. Yet the debts which he covenanted to pay and left unpaid have ruined many. He has mocked the supplications of his nearest kindred, and been deaf to the voice of love and chivalry. Not one sixpence can be got out of his Grace; for is not his wealth protected by the

law of entail and his person by the privilege of the Peerage? His ancestors' name, his father's reputation, he holds as cheap as his own has come to be held.

Might not a question, therefore, be fairly raised as to whether any one should be allowed to succeed to a title till he has paid the just claims on it? In equity it surely stands in pawn, and should be redeemed before it can be honestly worn. People lent this man and his father money because they were Dukes, and were known to possess a large property. Creditors believed in a Duke's honour, still more in the honour of two Dukes, when they would not have believed in that of a commoner. Dukes are among the foremost of our public men, and they are *ipso facto* members of our Government. They present, therefore, to the common understanding, guarantees of stability, which meaner persons cannot offer. It is so easy for them to impose on the ordinary run of their fellow-citizens, that it ought to be rendered impossible; and to give an *ignoramus* thousands upon thousands of pounds a year out of the national taxation, to lodge, warm, serve, light, and decorate him, merely because he is a Duke, yet to allow him to set the precepts of good faith at naught, and to deny all his obligations as a gentleman, is to practise customs which savour of fetish-worship rather than of the domestic policy of a great people.

IV.

POLITICAL OLD FOGEYS.

When peers like the Lord Pudden mentioned in the preceding pages become old fogeys they are Earls and K.G.s, and addict themselves to a particular branch of business, which usually consists in badgering the responsible holder of the office which they once held. Say Lord Pudden was President of the Waste-Paper Office: he considers it his duty to keep an attentive eye on all his successors in that department. He trumpets their inefficiency through an empty House of Lords, between four o'clock and five, during the dog-days; he calls on them for papers; he belabours them with ponderous advice; he accuses them of being indifferent to the interests of their country; it is to be feared that he often makes them curse and swear in private. His lordship's dulness has not worn away with years; it has solidified into a twenty-peer power of boring. Lord Pudden, with a sheaf of papers in one hand and a double eye-glass in the other, will quote extracts from Blue-books and sententiously emit



aphorisms for an hour by the clock. Nobody dare stop him; and possibly none could if they dared attempt it.

The truth is, Lord Pudden never resigns his
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hopes of holding office again. He believes that any Ministerial crisis might lead to his being recalled to his old post, or offered the Privy Seal. He would accept even a lesser office which brought him pay and the faculty of jobbing; for though he has become mighty rich by place-holding, and can reap no new honours by mismanaging the public business, the instincts of meddling and muddling are so strong in him that they amount to a monomania. Take from Lord Pudden the hope of again crossing his legs under the mahogany of Downing-street, and he would pine away like a parasite torn from the parent oak.

It was different with Johnny Bustle, who, knowing that his own days of seal-jingling had gone, never to return, was content to lift up his croaking voice at times to carp at what his successors were doing. But the crow of the old chancery at last grew so weak that it barely reached the reporters' gallery; and he preferred making what noise he could with pen and ink rather than on the floor of the House of Lords. He wrote letters to *The Times*, and whining pamphlets, headed subscriptions in favour of rebels, patronised Radical parliamentary candidates, and took the chair at public meetings convoked for sensational purposes. His prestige as an ex-premier was still great enough to give his

words some little weight abroad ; and he abused this circumstance to harry and thwart his opponents by all the means which senile ingenuity could suggest.

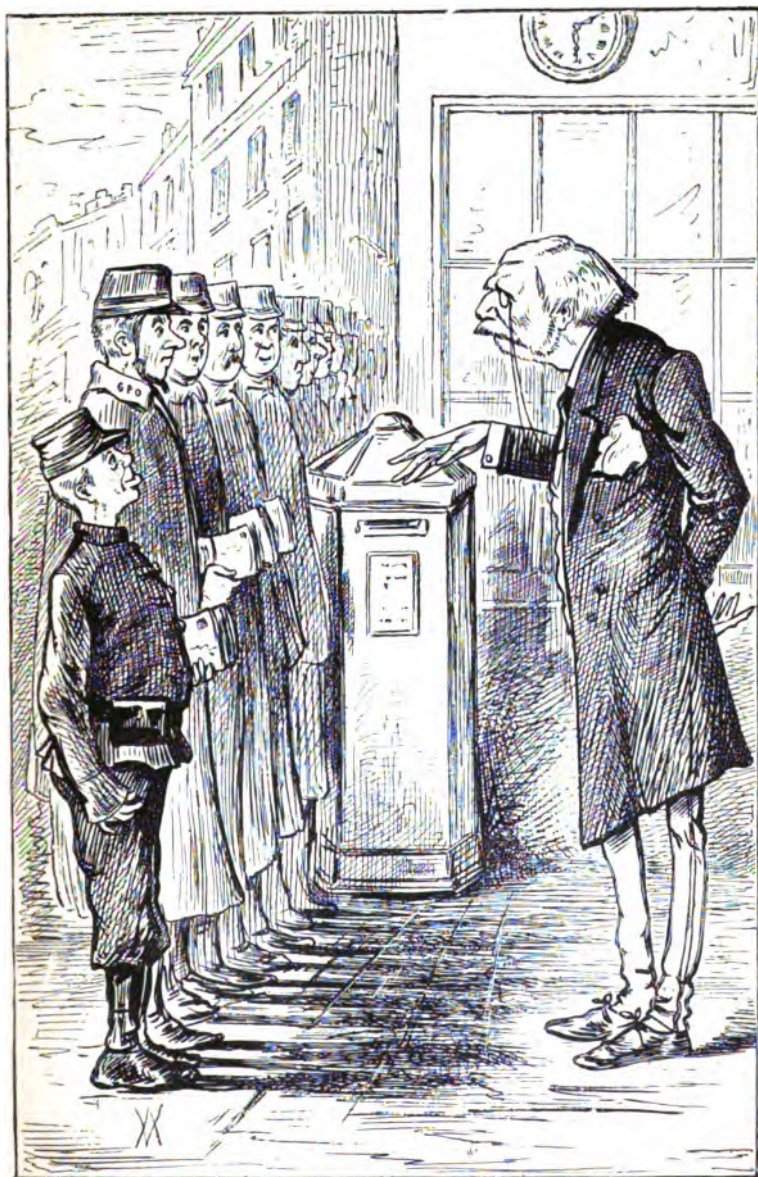
Patriotism and Liberalism were only knucklebones with which the old politician juggled, for England's honour was never so meanly handled as when Earl Bustle had the keeping of it; while his Liberalism was little else than a stale device by which he caught up the ideas of honest men and made them serve his own advantage, until the people grew tired of such insincere tricks, and would have no more of his leadership. To set up a yell in favour of Bulgarians or Poles, to be hot in the cause of French Republicans or American negroes, is a cheap way of asserting philanthropy ; but had Earl Bustle's heart ever beaten with one real honest thump for the cause of human welfare, he might have found numerous opportunities of bettering the condition of English paupers and Irish peasants, whilst he had an enthusiastic parliamentary majority on his side and a credulous nation behind him.

In his declining years the temper of Johnny Bustle grew bilious from seeing that since he had dropped out of political life Britain was all the better for the change. When, however, any national disaster befell, he was eager in proclaiming that it had

always been predicted by him, and that had his advice only been followed we should have been spared the catastrophe.

Less successful at the outset of his career than Johnny Bustle, his foc, Johnny Banners, has been spared so great a fall. He dropped on to a bed of Post-Office papers. Doubtless it is an anticlimax for one who started with the notion of wearing the mantle of the two Pitts, never to have found himself higher perched than at the top of the postal department; but Johnny Banners, when calmly reflecting on the subject, ought to see that even this rise was far in excess of his merits. If he were not brother to a Duke, and heir of the dukedom, he would not have had a seat in the Beaconsfield Cabinet. He is one of those troublesome adherents of whom a Premier says when he forms his Cabinet, 'Where the deuce shall I stow that man?' and considering that he is equally unfit for all places of trust, it is concluded that he is good enough for any; and so in he goes, with all his squareness, into the first round hole vacant.

Johnny Banners retained enough of his old cock-a-whoop spirit to indulge in the strangest jinks of mightiness at the expense of his subordinates. He loved to play the despot, to sign sudden and startling decrees, which played old gooseberry with the letter-bags, and turned all the postmen sulky. He looked



JOHNNY BANNERS RATING THE POSTMEN.

upon these postmen as an army of his own raising; he seemed to think they needed discipline, and rated them soundly several times a year; if they respectfully memorialised him for an increase of pay or pension, he fumed outright, talked of mutiny, and forthwith made a wholesome example by dismissing some picked members of his host.

What a terrible Emperor of all the Russias autocratic Johnny Banners would have made, and what a dashing Premier of England he would have been in time of difficult relations with foreign Powers! While he sat at the Cabinet board, handling his paper-knife with an aggressive air, his talk was continually of sending fleets and despatching ultimatums. He was readily appeased, however, by the word 'impossible,' when it came from the lips of his chief, and would thereupon sit back, half closing his eyes, dreaming, maybe, that the spirit of statesmanship had died out of all British bosoms save his own. Johnny Banners soothes his leisure, when in Opposition, by writing Alexandrine verses thirteen feet long, which he reads to himself and appreciates highly.

V.

LORDS SPIRITUAL.

If a man desire a bishopric, we learn on respected authority that he desires a good thing. In England he desires a good income into the bargain, for there are no prelates so magnificently paid as those of the Established Church. A French Bishop flourishes contentedly on 500*l.* a year, an Italian on 300*l.* This would seem queer wages to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who draws 15,000*l.* per annum, or to the Bishop of London, who pockets 10,000*l.* Most of the other Bishops have salaries varying between 4000*l.* and 7000*l.*

It is only fair that a man who reaches the top of his profession, whatever it be, should be munificently rewarded. An Archbishop has as good a claim to live well, and to get the means of educating his children creditably, as a banker or a merchant; so it is not in any spirit of censorious criticism that the wealth of the spiritual peers is mentioned. Still, 7000*l.* to 15,000*l.* a year is hardly necessary for the purpose in question, or middle-class Englishmen would rarely receive good educations.

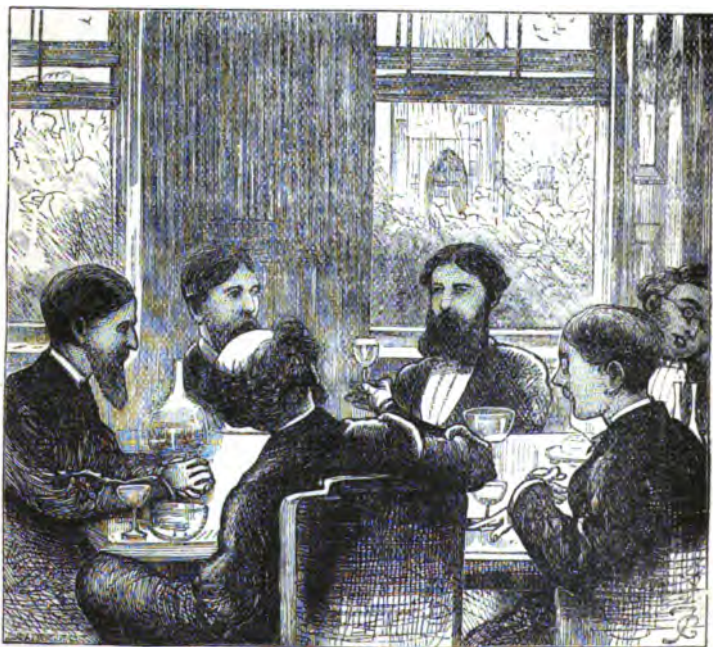
Undoubtedly our upper clergy are generally personally respectable, and the Episcopacy of England

is the most learned in the world. Appointments to bishoprics are closely watched, and have always been keenly criticised. Premiers might not always lay hands on the best men—they naturally jobbed bishoprics like other things—but they could not help appointing finished scholars, even when they went out of their way, as the younger Pitt did (greatly to the disgust of George III.), to prefer their own tutors to more eligible candidates. Take any three Bishops at random, and they might be pitted to hold their own at Latin, Greek, and theology against any three foreign Bishops picked from the whole of Christendom. As for the Cardinals (if we except Manning, who is an Oxford man), what three of them would care to measure their wits in Latin verses against Thompson, Wordsworth, and Temple?

As a fine average specimen of the English Bishop let us name the Right Rev. Dr. Bulleigh, who lords it over the see of Grandchurch.

Dr. Bulleigh is one of those men who owe everything to hard work, and who get the most splendid educations without, from first to last, costing their relatives more than 500*l.*—that is to say, about the sum which many a father is compelled to spend annually on the youth who elects the Army or the Bar for his profession. At eighteen Thomas Bulleigh was well-nigh independent: at twenty-one, entirely so.

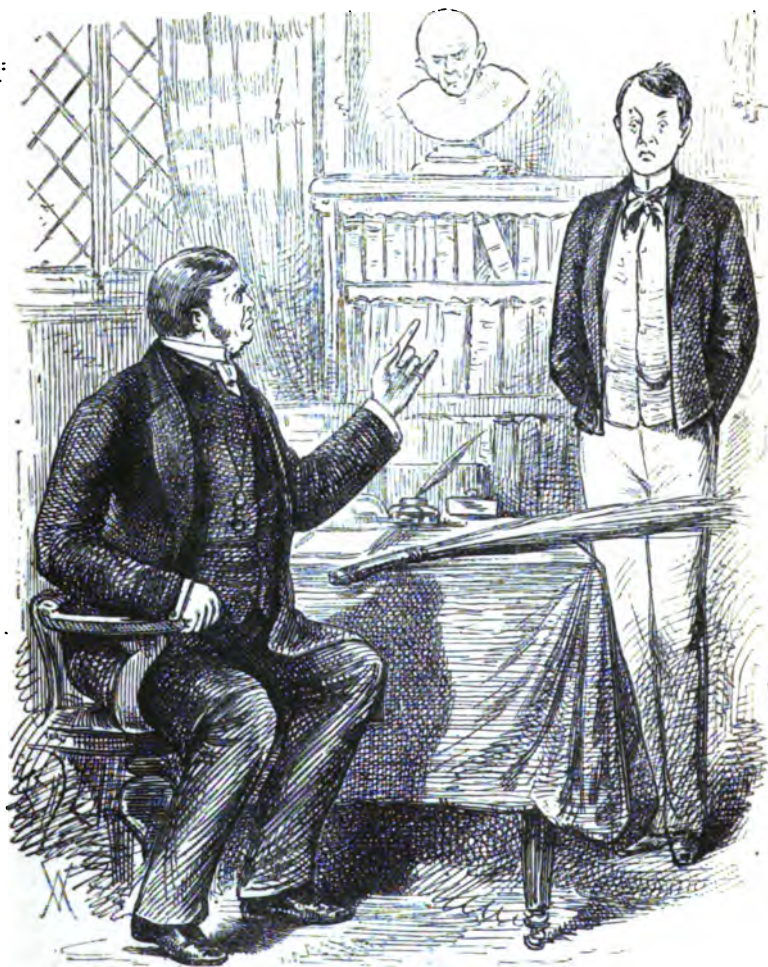
The son of a country clergyman, he was well tutored by his father, and obtained a Queen's scholarship at Westminster. Thence he went to Christ Church, Oxford, as a junior student, with rooms free and 120*l.* a year. Having in due course taken a first-class degree, he became a senior student, and stepped at once into an income which, thanks to the number of his pupils, amounted to nearly 1500*l.* No life is pleasanter than that of a don. He has a cosy set of rooms rent free; a comfortable hall, where he gets an excellent dinner, in capital com-



pany, cheap; libraries, means of recreation, and intellectual society abound in his University. And his prospects need never cause him a moment's uneasiness, for if he be not in too great a hurry to get married, he will be sure to obtain a good college living by simply waiting for it.

Or, if domestic life entice him, he may transfer his services to a public school, as the Rev. T. Bulleigh did, towards the age of thirty. The headmastership of a flourishing college being vacant, he sent in his testimonials; the fathers of two of his Oxford pupils were members of the governing body; they gave him their votes, and induced the rest of the board to do so. Although he was somewhat young for so responsible a post, Mr. Bulleigh's attainments were known to be in advance of his years; so behold him installed in a spacious schoolhouse with a big garden and an income of 3000*l*. As the custom is, he soon after took unto himself a pretty wife, the sister of one of his University chums.

A clergyman who gets so far in his career is bound to go farther. After wielding the birch with marked success for fifteen years over the backs of little and big boys, Dr. Bulleigh became renowned as one of the ablest of masters and most forcible of preachers. Two volumes of sermons delivered in the school chapel before his boy congregation



were considered as models of what such addresses should be; and it was a good testimony to the Doctor's character that the elder boys of the school, though they tingled at the recollection of certain

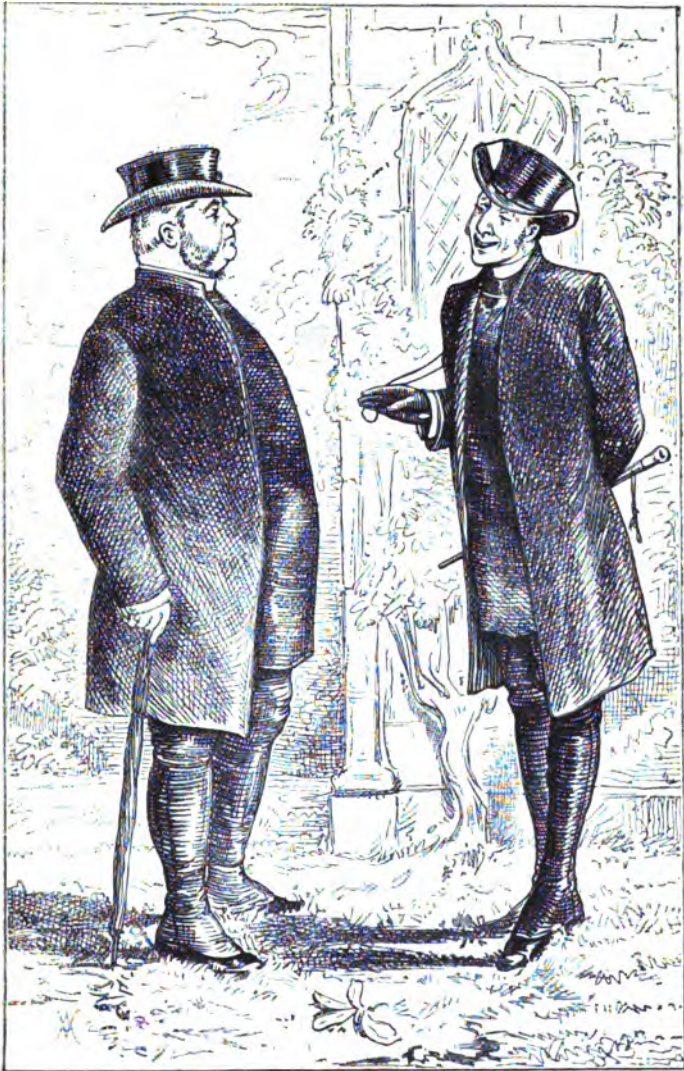
private interviews with their headmaster, spoke of him with respect, and looked up to him with a kind of love. An archdeaconry being offered to the Doctor was declined with quasi-haughtiness; a canonry of Westminster, and by and by a deanery, were also tendered in vain. 'Bishop or nothing,' said Dr. Bulleigh; and accordingly a Bishop he became.

He cuts a prelatial figure on the episcopal bench, and is always hearkened to with deference by their lordships. A Conservative and a steadfast Protestant, Dr. Bulleigh is not so bigoted a Churchman as to decline controversies with Dissenters on mystical points of the Thirty-nine Articles, but whomsoever he discusses with he pulverises. He has a grand way of carrying his shovel-hat aloft, and his apron covers an impressive rotundity of waist well suited to his dignity. These portly Bishops always show off better than the lean ones. Arrogant he may be, peremptory in argument he certainly is; but it does one good to see this rural parson's son risen by meritorious labour to the aristocratical senate, and holding his own without compromise against the unorthodox proddings of time-serving statesmen.

A Bishop like Dr. Bulleigh is not a toady—why should he be? He can expect nothing more than he has got; he has quantities of livings to give

away; he resides in a palace; he is lord supreme over his see—it is his vineyard, and who is there to make him afraid? You should see him deal with candidates for deacon's and priest's orders to understand how little of the tame spirit there is in the man. His fifteen years of headmastership have imbued him with the pedagogic starch which nothing can crumple out, and he browbeats his sucking parsons as if they were fifth-form boys given to shuffling through their Homer. Some of them cower under his rasping tones as he upbraids them for ill-digested divinity; but all are agreed that to be ordained in the see of Grandchurch is as good as taking a second degree in honours, for Dr. Bulleigh unmercifully 'ploughs' the halt and the lame. He says, truly enough, that the days of illiterate parsons are gone by.

Many others of his fellow-Bishops are like him; and yet there will occasionally ascend to the episcopal throne a prelate who is rather a man of the world than a divine, and who, in exteriors, plays his part much less majestically than the schoolmaster Bishops. Douce in manners, shy of committing themselves to any plain statements, abhorring controversy, or even mild discussion upon such topics of ecclesiastical discipline as Bishops must needs deal with, these right rev. lords, mostly related to the great governing families, pass through their episcopal career with no more noise than oil poured into a lamp.



THE RIGHT REV. DOCTORS BULLEIGH AND TRIMMIERS.

Dr. Trimmiers, Bishop of Worldlingham, is a prelate of this sort. His brother was a Whig peer, and

for many years a Cabinet Minister: not a particularly clever man or a good one, and Dr. Trimmiers is like him. He has all the Whig taste for jobbery. He was no sooner enthroned than he began to bestow the fattest benefices in his gift on his sons-in-law, nephews, and cousins' children. The ordinations at Worldlingham became a byword for the admission into the Church of well-connected dunces, who had barely scraped through a pass degree, and had no clerical vocation beyond that which is contained in a restless desire to elbow pious men out of Church emoluments. No classman ever showed his face at Worldlingham, and Dissent spread through the ill-governed diocese like an epidemic. The public press at last called attention to the scandal; but Dr. Trimmiers cared not two pins what any newspaper might say. There were party journals enough to take up the cudgels for him; and if the public sided with his critics, what on earth could that signify to him? For a cynical disregard of all decencies, for an utter patrician contempt of public opinion, commend us to a Whig placeman.

Dr. Trimmiers is a scholar and an amiable sayer of society nothings; he plies a capital knife and fork; and he has just wit enough to dismiss, with a dry impertinent joke, people who have favours to beg of him or grievances to lay before

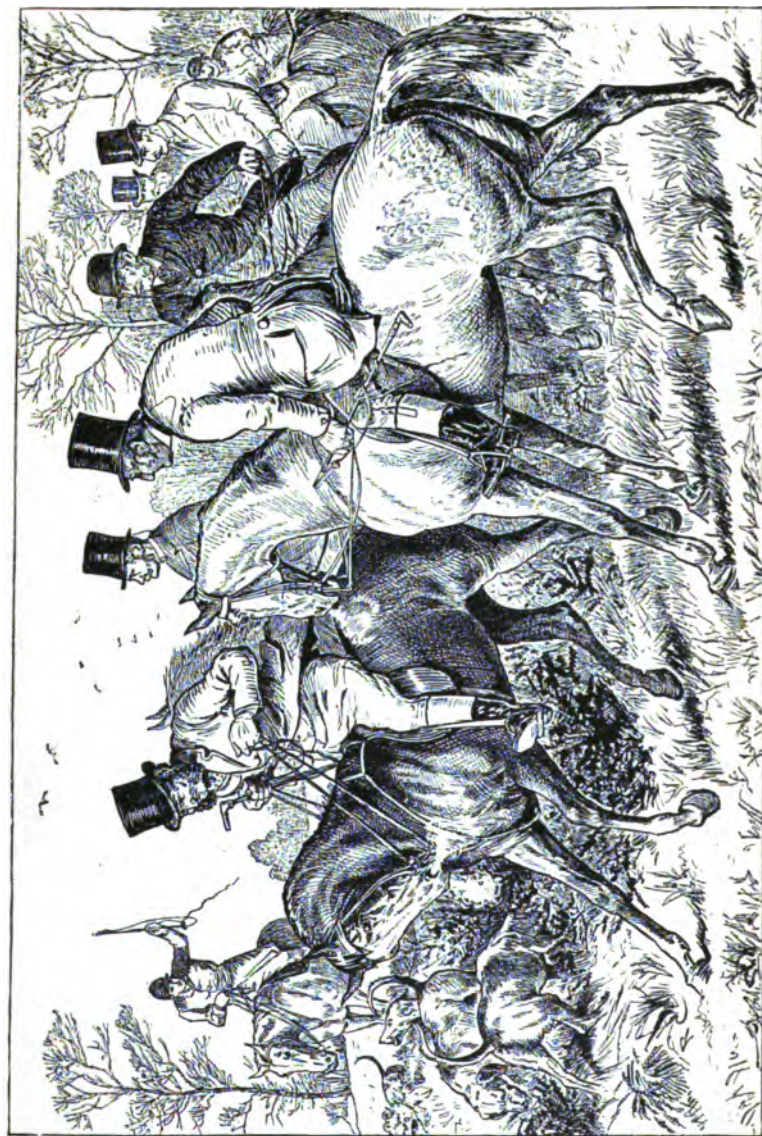
his notice. He resides mostly in London, and leaves the business of his see to be transacted by his chaplain, a nephew, who is a yet more thorough-going jobber and poco-curantist than himself. Some half a dozen times a year, at ordinations and confirmations, his lordship of Worldlingham lifts up his voice in the cathedral, treating his hearers to a cold soulless sermon, full of classical polish and comfortless philosophy. It would be an abuse of terms to call such a Bishop a Christian. He worships Mammon with a whole-hearted devotion, which no fear of God or man ever alloyed. Many Bishops of his stamp would long ago have caused the Church to be disestablished; and the time will come, it may be hoped, when the appointment of such godless snobs—for they are nothing else—will be resented as an outrage upon religion, and no longer be tolerated. One of the most satisfactory results accruing from the downfall of the Whig ascendancy is that the jobbery of bishoprics for the sake of overgrown family interest has ceased to have its *raison d'être*. The last arch-jobbing Premier was Lord Palmerston; and he, good easy man, would often have made better selections than he did had it not been for his religious kinsman, crony, and spiritual monitor, the Earl of Churchbury, a short sketch of whom is here appended.

VI.

THE SABBATARIAN PEER.

It is now many years since a high-nosed slouching youth, with a deal of shyness, which passed for conceit, might have been seen shambling about the pleasant lanes of Dorcasshire. He walked with the long stealthy stride of a Presbyterian Scripture-reader, who might be supposed by a careless observer to have at least one eye on the temporal things of the earth. He belonged to a family who were pretty well off, as times went in the early part of the present century. They had some land, which was not unproductive, though there was little of it; and the large-acred squires, who counted their farms by the dozen and their cattle by the herd, did not secretly think so much of them as they thought of themselves. Still they got a remunerative quantity of second-rate butter ready for market-days, and had a steady bailiff, who sold it at fair prices for ready-money. Their tenants, too, could afford to pay high rents, because the wars of Napoleon had raised wheat to a price never contemplated by Providence; and





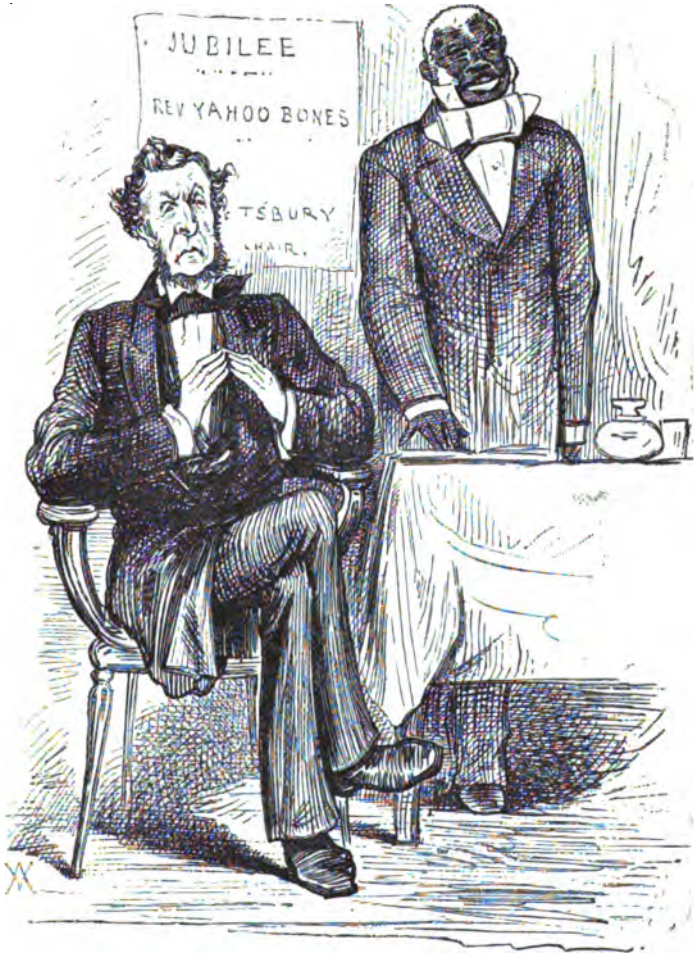
THE GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNTY AT COVER-SIDE.

the agricultural interest, in the persons of Dorcasshire yeomen and their womankind, was therefore agog with delight, breaking out all over in flowery waistcoats and gay-coloured gowns on festive occasions.

The youth above mentioned had, moreover, a strong pull over other people, because his ancestors had been called Earls of Churchbury for several generations. Nevertheless the young Lord was not half liked by his neighbours and contemporaries. He was never seen going at a hand-gallop across country on a well-bred hack, to meet the gentlemen of the county at cover-side. He could not talk on sporting topics for six hours at a stretch, and tell the same rough jokes all the year round, as the other Dorcasshire Lords devoutly believed that a nobleman, who respected himself, was bound to do. He was also a no-bottle man, having a weak head and a rickety constitution; so that he had been seen by astonished boon companions to shed tears on rent-days and harvest-home suppers, when flagons of ale and punch-bowls went freely round in brisk pursuance of old English customs. He was likewise much more fond of female sympathy than agreed with the rude manners of the time, and it was contemptuously remarked that he might always be found at the end of some woman's apron-string.

All this caused Lord Churchbury to be somewhat roughly brushed aside when he tried to domineer over his fellow-nobles, on the strength of a University degree which he had obtained. As he could not ride or shoot or take his glass, as a man ought, said the squirearchy, they changed the conversation with rustic arts not too refined when his lordship's name was mentioned; and they put queer smiles on their noses, rather than on their lips, after the rural fashion of being funny, when he appeared among them. He was left out of their social gatherings and succulent dinner-parties, till the taste of convivial cakes and ale was almost forgotten in his mouth.

This, however, did not prevent Lord Churchbury from making a rapid way in the world. The turn of his mind drew him towards religious subjects. He was a Low Churchman, half a Dissenter in doctrine, and indulged in hazy dreams for bringing back Wesleyans, Baptists, and others into the fold of Conformity. Pious Methodists, Quakers, and square-toed Jumpers became his intimates; the advocacy of their grievances was put into his hands; and when it was seen how solemnly he spoke and how often his name figured in the reports of Exeter Hall meetings, he was generally voted to be an authority on Church matters. His relatives, being Whig place-



men, were delighted to see him in such saintly odour with religious sects, whose votes were well worth having at election-time ; and somebody observed that

if Lord Churchbury had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him for party purposes. It is certain that he withdrew the support of the Low Church clergy altogether from the Tory party, and kept his kinsfolk a long time comfortable in their berths in consequence.

Notable service like this called for recompense, and matters soon came to such a pass that the Premier durst confer no bishopric, deanery, or Crown living without consulting Lord Churchbury. Nor did his lordship vouchsafe his advice on clerical appointments in anything like a rash spirit. As was to be expected, he first saw that his relatives and friends were well attended to, and then cast his eyes about among all the quiet, sober, and discreet doctors of divinity, who were not likely to break away from his control, once the lawn was put on them.

It was a sorry passport to Lord Churchbury's favour to be a man of towering intellect, with a commanding voice in the pulpit and a ready pen. When his party were out of office occasionally, it used to make him frantic to see such men appointed by the Tories. He would have liked the Queen to keep all the sees vacant until the Whigs and he were in power again to advise her; it is even said that he used some roundabout influence to advise her Majesty to exert her prerogative in this manner on a certain occasion





A SOIRÉE AT CHURCHBURY HOUSE.

when a Tory Cabinet was known to be at the last gasp.

As the Low Church press was ever at his beck, Lord Churchbury was enabled to stir up loud clamours against every High Church appointment; and he would goad on his own Bishops to quarrel with the others in Convocation, till the debates of the spiritual parliament recalled the wonders of an Irish faction-fight. The better to keep up his authority over clergymen of every degree, my lord extended hospitality to them under the form of casual dinners and frequent teas. On Wednesday and Saturday evenings Churchbury House used to be black with them.

Nobody has a right to cavil at the influence which a man may exercise by legitimate methods over his fellows. Leaders of men there must be, and it is not every leader who is so earnest in his vocation as Lord Churchbury was and is. It is impossible to forget, however, that it is to this strait-laced Earl and his sable clique that England is indebted for the maintenance of that rigid Sabbatarianism which has done so much to encourage Sunday drunkenness and promote crime. The opening of museums, libraries, and the Crystal Palace on Sundays; the harmless recreation of music in the parks; everything, in short, which could tend to the exhilaration of a day which was

appointed for the rest and relaxation of man, has been vigorously opposed by Lord Churchbury in the name of morals.

His lordship is a good man—a devout worshipper, and a firm believer in the beneficial results to be derived from attending three services in one day, besides singing hymns at home between whiles. Unfortunately, his character is not such as to fit him for the enjoyment of exuberant mirth on weekdays; so that he is not in a position to sympathise with the popular craving for amusement on the only day out of the seven when poor people can get it. He has not succeeded in filling the conventicle; but he helps to drive the Sabbath-oppressed working man to the public-house.

It would be unfair to close a sketch of Lord Churchbury without remarking that he is charitable with his money, and has done good in many narrow-minded, but not less meritorious, ways. He would deserve a kind word if it were only for his labours in the cause of education. He is not like the religious nobles of some foreign countries, who think that popular faith must be based on ignorance.

VII.

THE PHILANTHROPIST PEER.

From Lord Churchbury to Lord Pynshed the transition is not wide—the one a Sabbatarian, the other a philanthropist.

A long, thin, girlish creature, with a shrill voice and a bushy beard, are the outward visible signs of this rather droll Marquis. He used to go about looking into the grievances of servant-maids, rabbits, and old hens, collaring beggars in the street and hauling them off before the magistrate, that they might be committed to prison, and have the benefit of a bath and shorn locks. He rescues small street-boys from evil associations by having them sent to industrial schools. He presents old girls in the work-house with flannel petticoats and parcels of snuff.

His heart is larger than his head; for, while prowling about the highways in search of those whom the lion of vice might devour, he forgot to look through his own house, and ascertain whether the aforesaid lion had not got in there through some back-door. He was disgusted to find one day that the lion had not only walked in, but had walked out



again, taking away the whitest turtle-dove from his family dovecot.

He bore this domestic mishap more philosophically than he might have endured the loss of his

umbrella, had a supperless beggar helped himself to it. His mind is so enwrapped in the fog of poor-law problems that he neglects to eat his soup with care, and spills much of it into his beard. He lives in a chronic amazement at the number of beggars there are on earth, though he is chary neither of his pence in relieving them nor of his time in hunting them down. Sometimes it strikes him, with all the force of a new idea, that there must be people who impose upon him; and the first begging-letter writer who importunes him when he is in this mood is made a public example. One of this tribe, against whom he obtained a sentence of six months on the treadmill, explained with pathetic astonishment that he had never expected to be treated in this fashion after receiving so many tokens of his lordship's kindness. 'But this is the first time I have ever heard of you,' observed Lord Pynshed. The rogue shook his pate and smiled: he said he had thrice written to his lordship under different names, and had received a five-pound note on each occasion.

It is easier to laugh at a philanthropist than to emulate the amiable foibles which make him a subject for laughter. To begin with, an amateur who should aspire to keep in stride with the Marquis would need a power of money; for his lordship could (at one time) give away 100*l.* a week without withdrawing a

single *entrée* from his well-served table. This does not detract from the virtue of his gifts, for there is many a peer richer than he who would see a beggar at Jericho before he went out of his way to inquire why his trousers were in such forlorn condition. Several of Lord Pynshed's brother peers who go in for philanthropy have taken their lessons from the gentleman who addressed Canning's 'Needy Knife-grinder.'

It is the misfortune, rather than the fault, of Lord Pynshed that he has earned more ridicule than gratitude by his labours in the cause of the poor. Perhaps he has exposed with too stolid a good faith sores which polite society would rather have kept concealed. Perhaps he has spoken some ugly truths in high places. Perhaps he has given some beggars to understand that he did not consider they were wholly to blame for the dilapidation of their garments; and these beggars may have noised the thing saucily into the ears of other noble lords.

Marquis Pynshed is at once too truthful and too timid for the part he would play. Too truthful, because a Marquis is not expected to rake up the mud of abuses like a demagogue; and if he insists upon doing so, he must expect to be told that his hands are not clean; too timid, because he has never cared to identify himself uncompromisingly with the popular movements for relieving the lower

classes. He has wished to be a philanthropist and a Marquis at one and the same time. He has aspired to act independently, and has converted himself into an Ishmael, against whom those whom he has benefited poke fun, and at whom his fellow-lords contemptuously sneer.

They sneer so unanimously that even Bob, Lord Chousington, curls his lip at him. Now who is Bob Chousington, that he should presume to be thus merry at a man who wears his heart upon his sleeve? Bob Chousington belongs to another variety of the peerage. He is a coaching Lord; one who tools a four-in-hand about, and contrives to make it pay, like everything else he turns his hand to. It is of this ornament to his order that we have next to speak.



VIII.

THE COACHING PEER.

There are not two opinions in England about coaching, or any other honest form of horsiness. Our nobility, clergy, and commonalty love the road, the field, and the turf with an inborn affection which seems a peculiarity of our race and nation. We admire the bold jockey and steeplechase-rider who starves himself till he is a light weight of renown, fit to take part in our Olympian games; and the jockey winner of a Derby steps straightway into a finer fortune and better prospects than often come to any toiler of the brain after the labour of a lifetime. There is reason enough too in our predilection for horses and horsemen. A man who rides straight to hounds, and goes across country without craning, may generally be relied upon to act fairly in all his dealings; for he must have plenty of nerve, discretion, pluck, and good temper. A thoroughbred, who knows how to gallop, will not stand rough handling; and when the gallant brute has once got into his stride in company, all that the best rider can do

is to keep his hands down and sit fast, happen what may.

Also a noble coachman, who can match a team of four horses so that they agree to a hair in height and colour, that they are even in temper and cour-



age, and that they all step together like music, is a personage seldom wanting in good taste and sound judgment. He must choose bone and breeding, steadiness and high mettle, for his wheelers; grace, action, bright looks, and kind manners, for his leaders, or he will either stick fast in heavy ground,

or have his splinter-bars kicked to pieces the first time he gets into a difficulty while springing his cattle down-hill with an express train whistling on each side of him.

But there are exceptions to every rule, and what is to be said of a man who, born to the duties of a legislator, a magistrate, and an officer, sets up a four-horse coach for business purposes, and sells his screws to his partners in a speculation on the fondness of silly people for a coronet?

Bob Chousington cannot plead poverty as an excuse for turning coachman. He inherited a rent-roll of over 40,000*l.* a year, and has spent his money carefully enough. In youth he was a specimen of that not very lovely type of humanity, the thrifty rake. An ineradicable love of petty gains, and an attraction towards the company of the proletariat, for which genealogists may account as they will, seem to have impelled Bob to augment his swollen income by driving a coach for hire, and thus gratify the two master-passions of his mind. He has earned many a five-shilling piece, and shrewdly invested the same. Moreover, he is a distinguished character to the ostler at the Spotted Dog, to the one-eyed boots at the Rat and Badger, and to the flirtatious barmaids of the Free-and-Easy. He is a sworn member of the Brotherhood of Jockeys, and could give a wrinkle





"BOB IS TIPPED HALF-A-CROWN BY A BREEZY PASSENGER."

II. 103.

to a Yorkshireman. The only persons who look askance at Bob are certain menials, possessed by an uncomfortable idea that my lord occasionally diverts the gratuities of the generous from their pockets into his own. Now and then Bob is tipped half-a-crown by a breezy passenger; and, as Bob puts it, 'one is bound to pocket it, you know, just to keep up the spirit of the thing.' Spirit is a happily elastic word, expressing at once the temper of mind displayed by the Barons who won us the Great Charter, and by the Barons who act for us as common carriers. Equally from a noble desire to play his part thoroughly, Bob will not unfrequently stand glasses all round to his congenial acquaintance, and hobnob with them, just to show he is no prouder than he should be. Bob is a Liberal, and the bank in which he is a partner has been enabled to render some shrewd services to his party at election-time.

But the passion of Bob is for money-making. He cannot help it; it runs in his blood, and is perhaps associated with a taint of hereditary insanity. Bob's father was a maniac, who believed that an honourable part of his person was made of glass, so that he was afraid to sit thereon, and used to discharge the legislative and judicial functions of a peer and lord-lieutenant standing. Such crazes, transmitted to a

son, may assume divers forms, and it is possibly Bob's destiny to end his days as a miser, believing himself destitute, and clutching at the pound a week which his friends will allow him to humour his whim.

A favourite trick of Bob's is to lend money to exalted personages, charging only what he calls the legal rate of interest—twelve per cent or so—and stipulating royal favours in return for his generosity. Sometimes he gets a colonelcy for a brother ; sometimes he is allowed to accompany a prince in his travels ; once he was permitted to parade himself in the House of Lords in a yeomanry uniform, and to move the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech. Those who confer these favours imagine that they make Bob pay dearly for them ; but Bob always has the pull over them in the long-run. Through the managers of the banking firm in which he has a share he knows the credit of every man in town, and never lends to a gentleman who is in serious pecuniary straits. By safe speculations in this line Bob has increased his domains pretty considerably, and estreated not a few pawned heirlooms into the bargain. In an upper room of his country mansion he keeps quite a museum of family treasures—that is, treasures that once belonged to other families ; and he sells some from time to time to wealthy parvenus, lord-worshipping Yankees, and others who are dis-

posed to pay for them ten times what they are worth, on the strength of Bob's clever puffery.

'Look at this opal,' says Bob, having rubbed the jewel on his sleeve. 'There is a prejudice in our family against opals, so I don't mean to keep this one, though Marie Antoinette wore it on the scaffold. It is worth a thousand guineas as you see it. It's the biggest of its kind. But I'd sell it for 500%. on behalf of our county hospital.'

Bob pays some of his tradesmen in opals 'worn by queens,' or in diamonds that have 'glistened on the hilts of kings' swords;' but most of his purveyors get no money from him at all. He introduces customers; and by a tacit agreement the tradesmen never send in his bills. On the other hand, if one of Bob's *protégés* neglects the Christmas settlement with his tailor, Bob is down on the culprit at once, threatening him with social ostracism and other atrocious things. He can curse and swear like a tithe-proctor when he has anything to gain by overawing an indebted youngster.

Bob's morals are the reverse of pure; but he takes care to make his relations with the other sex thoroughly remunerative. Once, but once only, was he nearly being 'let in' to the tune of a diamond bracelet, which had been pawned to him, as per custom, through a money-lending crony. Having

offered this trinket to a Miss De Brompton as a token of his esteem, he found this lady on the very next day taking afternoon tea with a noble Duke. Full of wrath, Bob bundled his Grace out of the house, which he could safely do, for the Duke was old enough and mean enough to be his father. Then Bob returned and chastised Miss De Brompton with his umbrella, bidding her remember that when he gave diamond bracelets he would brook no infidelities.

Soon afterwards Miss De Brompton advertised herself to the world as proprietress of a theatre, where 'leg-pieces' were to be performed. This moral establishment had been rented and furnished with Bob's money; but by the time he had recouped himself three times over for his investment, he was alike tired of the playhouse and Miss De Brompton, and got rid of both in an ingenious manner, the less said about which the better.

However, though Bob Chousington is, to put things mildly, nothing better than a low grubber of money, of the extent of his authority there can be no manner of doubt. In the first place, his person and character are held by our social code to be inviolable. He has shown the white feather, and remains an officer in the army. He has been convicted by a jury of his countrymen of an offence which would have put to shame any man of honour,



MISS DE BROMPTON.

yet he continues to act as a magistrate. Newspapers decline to publish unfavourable comments on his actions; so that the statute of *Scandalum Magnatum* has only fallen into desuetude for an excellent

reason. Our ancestors held it to be a terrible thing to libel a peer, and inflicted severer punishment on the offender than if he had spoken ill of a private individual. We are wiser in our generation, and do not give any one the chance of committing so awful a crime.

Still, one might put up with Bob were his privileges of a merely passive kind: unfortunately, the Constitution encourages him to be aggressive. Acting at the instigation of a defendant's attorney, he waylaid and assaulted the plaintiff in a Chancery suit against one of his business connections, who had notoriously conducted a traffic stigmatised by the House of Commons as 'infamous.' To enable him to perpetrate this outrage with impunity, Bob prudently retained the services of an escort of prize-fighters, and wrought the deed of cowardice by night. The thing was easily enough managed under these conditions; and a roguish attorney having been selected to act as false accuser before a sycophant magistrate, the trick was played. Played sharply too; for Bob's magistrate was an Irishman, who, with a natural confusion of ideas, desired to exalt the peerage of his native country in the person of Bob, who is an Englishman.

My Lord's breach of the law and contempt of court were committed a few days before the trial should have come off. But Bob had no difficulty in getting

it postponed. He went further, and exercised the judicial power of transporting the plaintiff for life. A feudal tyrant of the Middle Ages could scarcely have suppressed a Jew creditor with greater expedition.

How, it may be asked, could Bob transport any one for life? No judge of the High Court at Westminster drives a coach. One must reply with the legal maxim, *Qui facit per alium facit per se*. The facts are recorded in the annals of our time, to be read by all, to be understood by anybody who takes the trouble to reflect. Let such a one remember that this is essentially an age of sly crimes. Public opinion is at heart sound enough to prevent acts of glaring oppression, should it become cognisant of them. But men who are promoted to honour and power, for no merit of their own, may often be covetous, unjust, and cruel. These will accordingly use their influence—the influence of wealth and rank—to prevent public opinion from being correctly informed of the facts of any culpable transaction in which they may happen to have been mixed up.

If Englishmen saw Lord Midas stabbing Colonel Bayard in the back, they would do something more than cry shame; and Midas knows this well enough. So he works in the dark, and gets lacqueys and tailors' touts and courtesans to perform his sinister behests. Worse than this, he has devised the supreme art of

corrupting the press without making it lose its sense of self-respect. The editor of the smallest provincial paper, to whom you offered a bribe in the most delicately worded way, would probably request you to choose between leaving his room by the door or the window. But he is easily to be got at, by those who know the trick; as are editors of journals supposed to make and unmake Cabinets, but which, in reality, Ministers make and unmake. Midas is a member of a close corporation called 'Society,' into which it is the highest ambition of every Briton to be admitted; and editors are only accorded this favour on the understanding that they shall think, speak, and write in the tone of the privileged caste. Even the judges dare not come in conflict with Society. The Queen herself cannot protect a man whom Society wishes to destroy. So Bayard discovered when the judges refused him justice, and the newspapers published a garbled report of his case; and in his despair he appealed to the Sovereign he had served so loyally through a lifetime, and appealed in vain.

IX.

SPORTING PEERS.

A false step on the staircase of an eating-house in Paris suddenly made a Duke of a red-headed hobble-dehoy, and put him in possession of a Scotch fortune. He was a stout podgy boy, abounding in health and strength, whose clothes always looked too tight for him, and he really did not know what to do with himself. His very hair curled quite crisp with surprise at his own greatness. 'By Jingo,' he seemed to be saying to himself privately, 'here's a go! I'm blessed if I am not two of the first Dukes going, a Prince, three Magistrates, and two Colonels, all here under my own hat.' And this was all very well in its way, but that robust obstreperous boy wanted to amuse himself. He had an hereditary dislike to politics, not one of his forbears having distinguished themselves in public life for several generations. As long as he could be held in by a most respectable and careful mother, he confined himself to gay clothing such as invariably delights young gentlemen of his complexion. He thought

nothing of a white hat and a yellow greatcoat, with a red spotted neckerchief, relieved by turquoise studs. His very boots were particoloured, and his trousers were of the boldest patterns known among tailors. A loud garrulous boy too he was, always treading on other people's toes and thinking it a good joke. There was not room for him on the pavement of a street, or in the gateway of an inn. He puffed and blew and threw his arms about, and pelted chambermaids with the shells of the nuts he cracked when still an innocent child, or fondly imagined so to be.

His ingenuous youth, however, was soon over, for he was sent, as a duty British parents owe their offspring when high born, to Oxford; and there he shone out. Drags, tandems, hounds, and all that the University authorities pretend not to allow, were winked at in his case. His Grace spent most of his time at Limmer's while supposed to be in search of academic honours; and his college was proud of him. Just after he came of age there was a row; he was sold up by the late Mr. Badwig, and pleaded minority. This would not do, however. Badwig had him too tight, and they became fast friends. Badwig and the Duke changed places for several years. The money-lender was lord of the Duke's castle and lands, put them to a rack-rent, and managed things for him generally, while his Grace



was on the turf. Badwig lent the Duke money too, like a wily, clever, calculating Badwig as he was.

Badwig did the Duke's odd jobs, and some of them were very odd jobs.

His Grace of Gambleton, who wore his heart upon his sleeve, had a habit of making miscellaneous acquaintances in his dashing off-hand way. He even condescended to negotiate a ducal loan with them, and drove them about in his business-like trap with the two fast-trotting cobs, showing an absence of pride and a geniality of manner truly refreshing. They were, therefore, amazed when he unaccountably went from their gaze, and Badwig was sent to deal with them on strict dot-and-carry-one principles. A Swiss gentleman, who thought he was going to make a fortune out of the Duke's inexperience, was cruelly disappointed when he found that Badwig rather proposed that the Duke should have a considerable sum of money out of him, and talked very vaguely about repayment. The manner in which the Swiss gentleman dwelt upon his astonishment when this fact was explained to him showed a command of vigorous language quite unusual.

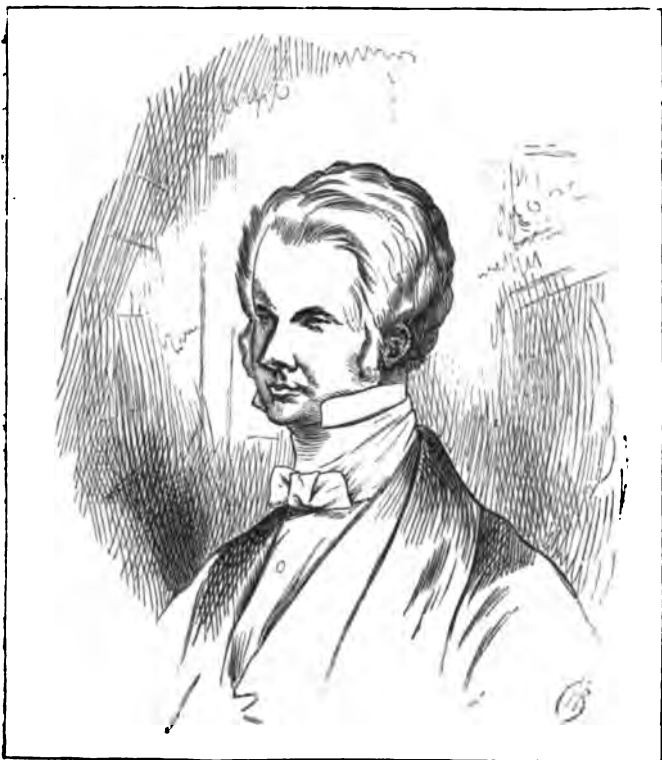
Things went on swimmingly, however, with the Duke of Gambleton. Trumps were always turning up for his Grace in some way. Railway companies wanted to run new lines through his estates, geologists found out mines in unsuspected places, speculative builders were eager to deal with him for

picturesque sites. Besides, he often betted successfully ; sometimes too he won races as well, and as he spent all the money he received, he got along famously in the world, leaving Badwig to deal with his liabilities. In short, he led a life of endless jollity, and really enjoyed it. It was 'Blow me tight, Badwig, you *are* a trump!' and 'Well, your Grace, I do my utmost,' all the year round, and Badwig thought his little game was not a bad one. Perhaps the Duke was of the same opinion ; perhaps not. Noble lords not unfrequently keep their own counsel in such cases.

One day, however, the usurer thought he should like to balance accounts. He did not quite see his way any farther. His Grace had a life interest in about 150,000*l.* a year, and had spent something more than the net purchase value of it, according to Badwig's calculation, which was presumably accurate. Then his Grace was already married, and he had no reversions of much consequence. Badwig thought of all this very patiently, and then called for his little bill. 'I want my money,' said Badwig, in plain terms. 'You don't say so, old man !' replied his Grace, with perfect good-humour. 'No larks,' remarked the money-lender, in a dry hard voice. Then the Duke rounded on him beautifully. It would have been an impressive lesson for any one

who doubts the wisdom of our hereditary legislators to see how coolly the inexperienced peer handled the clever usurer.

In the first place his Grace of Gambleton referred the astonished Badwig to Slypuss, a gentleman in



his own line of business ; and Slypuss insisted upon a detailed account of the transactions upon which Badwig based his claim. Badwig pleaded that

his accounts had been all passed as correct, and showed sheaves upon sheaves of documents bearing the ducal signature. Slypuss, acting for his noble client, talked only of the Central Criminal Court; and it is a pleasing fact—as evidencing the mental superiority of our upper classes—that the roystering, good-humoured, free-handed patrician showed himself such an excellent man of business when put to it, that he literally frightened a West-end money-lender of great shrewdness and experience to death; not figuratively, but really. Badwig had no idea what a clever client his Grace was, and suffered for his mistake. So the Duke continues to run as many horses as ever, and is quite a popular character. An entailed estate managed in this way lasts a long time; and a peer is always a worshipful person in this great country.

One unfortunate victim to the infatuation of horse-flesh, the Earl of Shortland, better known as Frank Vane, had a life of as bright promise before him as any young man in the three kingdoms, when unluckily his elder brother died, and made him heir to a peerage. Brave, generous, marvellously handsome, and by no means wanting in ability, the fatal gift of a title found him an officer on active service in India, and transformed him into a guardsman, with no earthly business but that of loitering about to

clubs and parties in London. The objects of a healthy ambition were suddenly withdrawn from him. He was sure of all that the authorities at the Horse Guards could do for him, and had no incentive to make a name for himself. He could not better that which he had got already. It ranked him with the Howards and the Nevilles; it dated almost as far back as our history.

What, it may be asked, is a bright young fellow, full of health and high spirits, to do under such conditions? Time hangs very heavy on his hands. Reading and writing are 'bad form;' and a man must have an occupation, some one thing, at least, that will enable him to get rid of his superfluous energy and animal courage. A European war would have saved him. He had the making of a great captain in him, for his troops would have followed him wherever he led. A winning kind-hearted man was Frank, and everybody liked him in his regiment, from the drummer to the colonel. Had his elder brother lived, Frank would have become the pride of the Vanes; as it was he went on the turf.

The usual results followed. He had not much to lose, but what he had he lost. Family fights had split up his inheritance, so that when he came into the peerage, after his father's death, the family solicitor looked grave, as he and the new Earl went



THE FAMILY SOLICITOR.

into accounts together. Frank, however, was not fond of reckoning, and much preferred the society of Mr. Badwig (who was also an attorney) to that of his family solicitor. Badwig talked to him of certain winners for the next Derby and Oaks, for the Chester Cup, and for Goodwood. And as far as 5000*l.*, or even 10,000*l.*, would go, was not Badwig there to serve him? Indeed, Badwig soon took his

affairs altogether in hand, and as Lord Shortland was not so shrewd a customer as the Duke of Gambleton, he had speedily no affairs left to manage. Badwig told him, one settling-day at Tattersall's, that



he could never raise another shilling till his son came of age, and advised him to go abroad.

‘What for?’ asked the Earl curtly.

‘O, I thought you might just like to save something out of the fire, you know, my lord,’ replied Badwig, sinking his voice to a whisper; ‘and—and—

well, leave me to manage with some of them.' The money-lender winked with much humour as he made this proposal.

'I shall pay my bets,' said the Earl, 'though I walk out of this yard without a guinea to call my own.'

'Well, if you will, my lord,' replied Badwig—'No offence, I hope?'

The soldier-noble gave a glance of haughty contempt at the usurer, and turned upon his heel. Lord Tilton passed just then, and the two peers walked up Grosvenor-place arm-in-arm.

'I'm cleaned out,' said the one noble Earl to the other noble Earl; 'my things will be sold. Will you have any of the horses beforehand?'

'What, going to the hammer?' inquired Lord Tilton coolly. 'By Jove! that's a neat cob waiting for Gambleton, isn't it?' and his lordship remarked the fine points of the Duke's horse, which was being led about by a groom. Then he added absently, 'Are you, though, really going to be sold up, Frank?'

'Yes,' said his companion, yawning.

'The dooce you are!' remarked the Earl of Tilton; and both noblemen separated at Hyde Park Corner as though nothing particular had happened. After all, too, ruin does not make so very much dif-

ference to an Earl. It never means so low a thing as want.



Lord Tilton, also on the turf, is a very different sort of person. He is an autocrat of the stable and the racecourse. The second son of a successful

building speculator, he has no end of money, and keeps a prudential hold of it. It is astonishing how much enjoyment can be got out of a large income cautiously handled; and Lord Tilton has had it all. The British nation too, in order to show how ardently it loves and admires a man who keeps his money well together, has made Lord Tilton a Doctor of Laws, a Knight Grand Cross, a colonel, a magistrate, and a Privy Councillor—all because he is the offspring of a rich man, who has himself remained rich; and, of course, because he is also a Lord. Needless to say he is not a lawyer, nor a military man, nor a politician; but we delight to invest our nobility with all the good qualities and virtues under the sun. Did not the wonderful Lord Furby lately turn up somewhere as president and chief of a company of gardeners? Wherefore, then, should not Lord Tilton, who certainly has not two ideas beyond his own amusement, be invested with judicial powers, and decide upon the characters and liberties of his fellow-subjects?

For the rest, his lordship is quite a leader of society. His aptitude for horseracing got him, as a matter of course, elected commodore of a yacht-club; and he is as potent at Cowes as at Newmarket. He gives excellent dinners. A seat at his table is considered one of the honours of the turf. Ladies are very fond

of him, and he is very fond of ladies; so that there is no love lost between them. It is not safe for even his brother-magnates to offend him. The mighty owner of Goodwood was made to smart for some slight, or fancied slight, he had offered to Lord Tilton. His lordship is still an elegant man, and a member of Boodle's. His colours are popular among the bookmakers. He has never been even suspected of any unsportsmanlike act, and is universally cited as an ornament to his class. He is decidedly a peer who takes his pleasures wisely, and enjoys them on moderate terms.

It is a pity poor Hattington, who was Master of the Buckhounds, did not follow Tilton's example. Tilton is quite as great a dandy—quite as much admired by women and envied by men—as Hattington in his glossiest days. The difference between them is that Tilton only paid a fair price for his amusements, and that Hattington emptied his purse for them. So good-bye to a fine place in the Household when the Tories come in again; also good-bye to much beside. A brilliant soldier, a scholar, a courtier, a fine gentleman, and a man of the world, he has had himself sold out of house and home and happiness to play at games beneath the intelligence of a respectable goose.

As for Lord Falmouth, brave Boscawen's heir—



the Bayard of the turf—let us wish him well out of it, among his Cornish woods at Tregothnan. There is other work for such as him to do. Worth and goodness and courage should not be wasted at a

horserace, for horseraces in our day are rather trials of cunning than trials of speed. And as for improving our breed of cattle, we are breeding a great deal too fine already. Our streets are filled with long-legged brutes which have neither substance nor endurance, and are only fit to bolt and tumble down by turns.

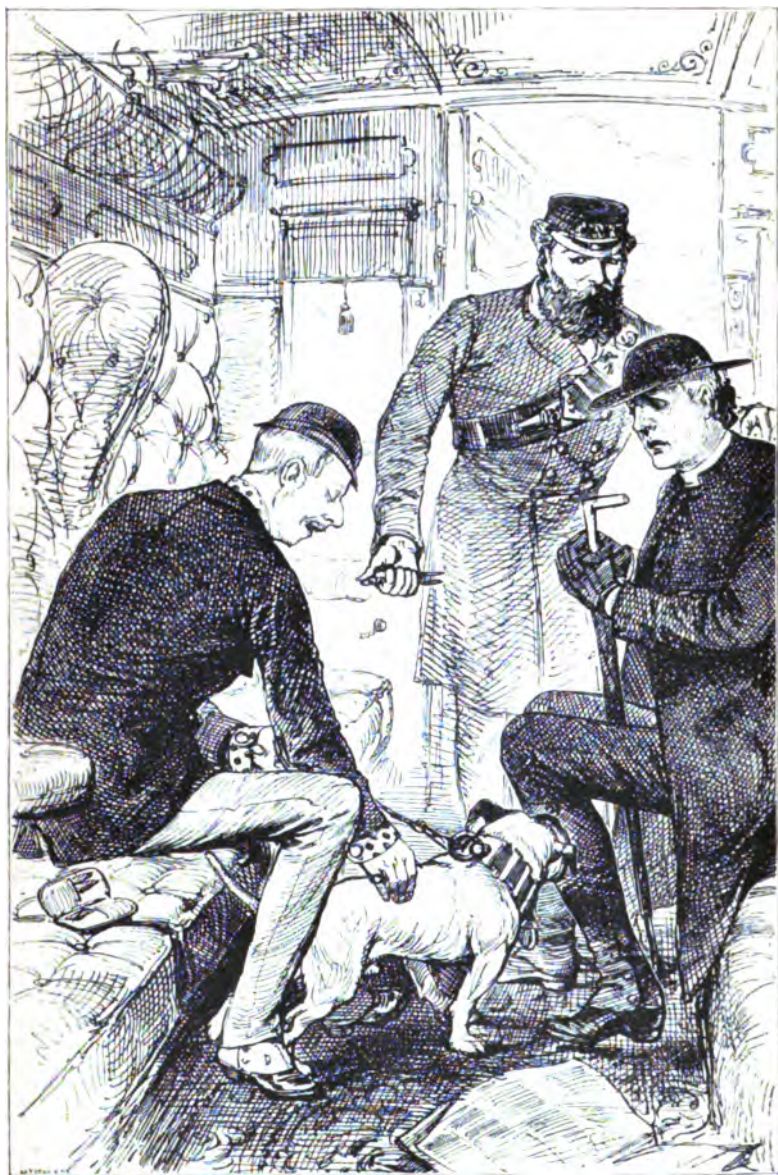
Next, there is Lord Eskdaile, with a rent-roll larger than the civil-list of a continental King, and the accumulations of hard-fisted generations, sold up, and sold up again, smashed, resmashed, and the rest of it, *ætat.* twenty-five. It is a sad pity these big fortunes should be put into the hands of children, only to ruin them body—and, yes—body and soul. Money is a fine thing, fit for most splendid and beneficent uses; but money in the hands of a tipsy boy goes mostly to the devil, and takes him with it.

Earl Dewsbury, too, almost the noblest lord in England, bound in the same direction, and dragged with his two coronets through a police-court about a queer horse case, *ætat.* sixteen—yet no tutors or guardians daring to interfere with him! Truly we Great Britons are a wonderful people!

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ONE OF LORD CHUCKSTONE'S PRACTICAL JOKES.

X.

SPENDTHRIFT PEERS.

One day a mild clergyman, travelling in a railway carriage, had a ferocious dog set at him by a young gentleman on whom his eyes had never had the pleasure of lighting before. He remonstrated, and even complained to the guard; whereupon the young gentleman, amazed at so much impertinence, exclaimed, 'I am Lord Chuckstone!' The guard reddened, and, nudging the divine, advised him to back out of the case, else it might be the worse for him.

Lord Chuckstone was at that period engaged in making ducks and drakes out of a by no means large



fortune. His noble father had already passed through the Bankruptcy Court. He himself was walking thither at a much more rapid pace than his progenitor, and was deriving much less enjoyment from his ruin. But though he was a rake, a spendthrift, a tipsy rough, and a loose fish in every way, he still retained prestige enough to make an inoffensive parson cower, and to shoot respectful horrors through the pulses of a railway official. If the clergyman had ventured to prosecute his lordship for assault, depend upon it he would have found himself in a very disagreeable pickle indeed.

Englishmen are content to let noble young cubs ride roughshod over them. Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* has not cured a man or a woman of the national itch for Lord-worship. The individual who assails a lord finds public opinion blowing against him from all points of the compass. His affairs get out of gear in an unaccountable way; his friends give him the cold shoulder; evil things are whispered about his name; and if he owe money anywhere his creditors will start up all of a sudden and pester him like wasps. It would have served our clerical friend nothing to have pointed to the hole in his leg made by the fangs of Lord Chuckstone's bulldog; he would have passed for a noisy churl, who liked to kick up a fuss about trifles. Even his Bishop would have lec-

tured him sternly on the Christian indulgence which is due to the vagaries of youth. If a youthful pot-man had set his cur at the episcopal calves, a different view might have been taken of the affair; but we are talking here only about lords temporal.

Lord Chuckstone must have discovered the social advantages accruing from a handle to one's name from the time when he was a schoolboy and borrowed half-sovereigns from his father's valet. At Eton the tradesmen were proud to let him walk off with their goods; and at Oxford, where he sojourned



but a brief space, owing to his persistent partiality for strong vintages and to some differences of opinion with the Dean of Christchurch, money-lenders and jewellers' bagmen put no limits to their faith in him. It made no difference that his father had paid his creditors twopence in the pound, and was debarred from taking his seat in the House of Lords by this unsatisfactory arrangement. The family estates were entailed, and Lord Chuckstone was bound to inherit them, even though the paternal debts remained unsettled to eternity. Besides, tradespeople have a lively faith that their noble debtors will always contrive to pay somehow. They will marry the rich daughters of merchants, or get some sinecure under Government, or hire out their names to grace the prospectuses of City speculations, and, becoming intimate with stock-jobbers, will make pots of money by recondite methods. A prudent money-lender will never part with the I O U's of a Lord, convinced that however much their value may sink below par, they will rise to a premium at some unexpected day. This hope has over and over again proved fallacious, but the usurers hug it all the same.

A Lord's I O U's are often not worth the paper they were written on when that paper was new, and yet the laws of primogeniture and entail allow a noble insolvent to continue living on a handsome allowance,

whilst his creditors divide amongst one another the few pence per pound that can be screwed every year out of an estate managed by assignees. There are family diamonds, plate, pictures, and books, which, if sold, could clear off all liabilities, but the creditors may not touch them. They are the heir's, who, on the strength of the booty thus held in reserve for him, will play the same pranks as his father, as will also his son after him, and so on *ad infinitum*. We might name certain noble families by whom the game of spoiling tradesmen has been carried on with a superb success during generations. Now and then a nobleman gets into brawls through bills of sale having flaws in them, and has to stand a siege in his own castle; but this is not often the case.

Sometimes, indeed, it does happen that the entail has been cut off; in which case the lordly debtor finds himself on the same footing as humble folk, whose goods are seized on by an order from the county court. But the kind feeling towards an impecunious nobleman is so universal that he must be an imbecile if he cannot continue to live on the fat of the land long after the avowable means of doing so have been withdrawn from him. His title is itself a fruitful field, which yields him crops until his last breath. He borrows money from middle-class sycophants, who would lend him their very shirts to have the

honour of receiving him at their dinner-tables. He sponges upon younger Lords who have not yet run through their money, and also upon young tailors • who have got commissions in the dragoons, and feel their stature increased by a cubit when he gives them an arm in public places. He accepts fees for proposing young snobs to his club, and commission-money from actresses to whom he introduces these well-feathered *protégés*, as pigeons that may safely be plucked.

As for clothes and cigars, he can often get them gratis from newly-established tradesmen, who employ him as a tout. Small hotel-keepers will likewise give him free board and lodging on the same terms; and if his lordship be travelling in any part of the United Kingdom, provincial hotel-managers will be so glad to get hold of him, that when he leaves, after a week's or a month's sojourn, he has only to say, 'Send me the bill to my club in London,' and this is enough. The bill is sent, and, of course, never paid. The son of an insolvent peer, having come in for a wind-fall, bethought him that he would satisfy his father's creditors, and inserted advertisements in the papers, calling upon all of them to send in their claims. He was surprised at receiving at least a hundred applications from country innkeepers, who had supplied the old nobleman with food and lodging on different occasions, straggling over a period of thirty years.



INTRODUCING A WELL-FEATHERED PROTÉGÉ.



A commoner must not demean himself in this style, or he would be sent to the treadmill. But setting aside the fact that a lord who is a peer cannot be tried for a felony except by the House of Lords, whose cumbersome tribunal has formalities and technicalities enough to nonsuit the boldest prosecutor, if not ruin him, besides allowing the delinquent plenty of time to get clear out of reach before the cause came on for a full hearing; setting aside this fact, which secures an impunity in law-breaking to the peerage, the position of a Lord who is not a peer is also strong enough to defy criminal action. A Lord who forces his way into a man's house to commit a dastardly assault may be sentenced to a fine; but the magistrates who inflict it offer their own signatures as security for its payment. Another Lord, who is drunk, disorderly, and aggressive towards the police, sends a doctor's certificate declaring that he is too unwell to attend at the police-court, and is represented by his valet, who announces himself as empowered to pay the fine, 'whatever it is.' A third Noble Lord, who goes about cheating cabmen, is let off with not so much as a reprimand, the magistrate simply ordering him to pay his fares within a month.

Justice is paralysed when she would strike at a scion of any lordly house. Some years ago a Lord did,

by misadventure, involve himself in such an unclean scrape that it became impossible to avoid summoning him—not as a defendant, that would have been out of the question, but as a witness. However, it did not suit his lordship to face a cross-questioning which would have proved him a knave; so a conclave of family doctors and lawyers got up the report that he was dead. A coffin full of earth was buried in his stead, and he is flourishing in America at this present hour.

It must never be forgotten by an Englishman who has a quarrel with a Lord, that his noble antagonist is not a mere creature of flesh and bones, but a fetish who has numerous kinsfolk and connections interested in upholding his inviolability. And behind these stands arrayed the whole phalanx of the peerage, with whom the assailant would have to cope if he broke through the first lines of defence. It is often a profitable business to have a good hold on a nobleman, for noble persons will disburse liberally to avoid a scandal; but if the pursuer be one of those phenomenal characters whom gifts will not appease, he will be made to feel what intimidation and oppression can do. There are myriads of Englishmen who are, in some remote way, dependent for their income or their peace of mind on props which the ill-will of the nobility could pull away from

them. Whether they be following a trade or profession, or be living quietly on their means, they must reckon with public opinion, and public opinion is swayed, directly or indirectly, by Lords.

A man's own wife, his parents, his children, may be found arrayed on the side of the nobility if he show himself stubbornly bent on combat. They will have been 'got at' by aunts, cousins, or mothers-in-law, who are anxious to curry favour with some one, dependent upon the good graces of some one else, who is the stanch friend of the Lord in trouble. The prosecutor will be told that he is rushing to certain ruin and infamy; his womenfolk will wring their hands and let down their back hair; and by such means all spirit, except that of self-preservation, will be wrung out of the man. A young fellow who had been knocked down by a drunken Lord was so unfortunate as to return the blow and stretch his assailant in the gutter. He was in consequence disinherited by his uncle, who lived in China, and obtained a garbled version of the affair from the Governor of Hong-Kong, who was a cousin of the Noble Lord's father's attorney.

XI.

PEERS WITHOUT RENT-ROLLS.

It does not follow that because penniless peers are free to live by dishonest methods, all avail themselves of the privilege. There are Lords who never had any money to lose, and who have never been lucky enough to make any. They have not had even a decent dose of shrewdness, else they would have turned politicians, or won prizes in the marriage lottery. They have a weak-knee'd sort of rectitude, however, which has prevented them from becoming sharpers or blacklegs. They live on expedients, which are mean rather than reprehensible, and are much worse thought of than if they were scamps.

A peer who confesses himself poor dispels a good deal of the majesty which should hedge a Lord. A deposed king riding in a cab is a pitiful sight, so is a Noble Lord cheapening a cauliflower in Covent Garden. The honester he is, and the nicer in his scruples as to indulging in goods which he cannot pay for, so much the greater will be the contempt poured upon him by the very men who would moan most sadly

over his aristocratic want of principle if he were to pluck them. One of the best excuses for the roguish antics of spendthrift Lords is that everybody pushes them to extravagance. From the toady tradesman to the tuft-hunting clubman, all people sing out to them that a Lord is bound to keep up his rank. The private sentiment of us good Britons is that a Lord had better wear a watch he has not paid for than pawn one for which he has paid to settle with his washerwoman.

Somehow poverty obliterates the self-respect of Englishmen, so that a penurious Lord is mostly a shabby one. It is not so with continental noblemen. Many a French count of ancient stock and brightest honour has lived on 200*l.* a year without ever being ill-dressed or gloomy. He has not run into debt; he has not dabbled in joint-stock speculations or bartered his name as a bait to any public fraud; he is not stingy with servants or hotel-waiters, and he would scorn to marry an underbred woman who brought him a million francs in each hand. If the truth were known, he lives on bread-and-cheese and boiled beef, never smokes, and blacks his own boots; but for all this he is constantly neat, cheerful, dignified, and a nobleman every inch.

Nobiliary pride is something more in his case than the satisfaction of wearing an empty title. He

clings to ancestral traditions as part of his religion ; he truly believes himself to be a member of a superior caste of mortals, who should set lower men an example of honour and polite manners. The common people respect his delusion ; and though they may make merry of his political opinions as antiquated, pronounce him a worthy representative of the epoch of chivalry. Nobody doubts that in a time of public danger he would come out with a sword, and rush off to charge the enemy in the front ranks.

So would Lord Bagobones, perhaps ; but England has not been invaded for many a day, and our nobility *en masse* have never had an opportunity of displaying chivalry. The word has no sense as applied to an hereditary patriciate, few of whose ancestors have been ennobled for services in the field. Peerages are conferred in Britain on successful lawyers, party-voters, hop-growers, and merchants. The peers are a body of men who derive their lustre from the solid privileges and the power which wealth and social connections give ; but there is seldom anything of ideal romance in the circumstances of their ennoblement, and when one of them grows poor it is no solace to his dignity to reflect that his grandfather was a prosperous pawnbroker in Cheapside, or an enriched soap-boiler, who voted, during twenty years, for Mr. Pitt. If you told such peers as Lords Pud-

den, Chousington, and Chuckstone that the fact of their being Lords constrained them to be generous in thought and bearing, gallant in manners, true and upright in all their dealings, they would call this 'flummery.'

As for poor Lord Bagobones, bless his heart! he is nothing mearer than a sorry old curmudgeon, who wears greasy hats and a weather-stained cloak cut in 1830; but he is as upright in dealing as his tradesmen ancestors were before they got the court gilding daubed on them. He would not give a waiter sixpence, because to do so would deprive him of part of his own dinner, which would be absurd; and he would not emit noble sentiments in favour of any one who was persecuted, because this might put him wrong with other noble persons, and make him feel foolish.

Lord Bagobones proves his nobility by being cautious in word and deed. Sometimes he rambles among the tables of his club dining-room, sniffs at the good things which other men are eating, and gets invited to dinner. He accepts without hesitation, and eats his fill. But his hosts must not expect to be regaled with any of the light wit and graceful chatter which would flow from the lips of a French nobleman, who deigned to be entertained by a person of rank beneath his own. To begin with, French noblemen of true stock are very particular whose in-

vitations they accept. Lord Bagobones would dine contentedly with his father's shoemaker; and his talk during the meal would be chiefly made up of 'You don't say so!' 'God bless my soul!' 'Capital joint, this;' 'Thank you, I will take another glass.'

Poor Lords generally avoid one another like the nightmare—anyhow, you never see two of them together. Lord Bagobones has never been met in the company of Lord Gryle and Grissle, who has a hat rather worse than his own, and a famished look altogether. Lord Gryle, however, makes six hundred a year by the curious expedient of delivering certificates to patent-nostrum vendors. For a long time he figured in the advertisement-sheets of newspapers, as the grateful acknowledger of benefits derived from 'Purger & Co.'s Drastic Pills.' Next he recommended mankind to run and buy a certain corn-plaster. Shortly afterwards, rheumatism seems to have got a bad grip of him, for he testified to the agonies he had suffered till relieved by somebody's electric waistcoats. Then his hair fell off, and was made to grow again by the 'Messrs. Buncombe's Capillarine.' Nature would appear to have exhausted her ingenuity in afflicting Lord Gryle and Grissle with ailments which the inventive faculties of man forthwith healed. The last thing heard of him was that he was curing him-

self of a violent attack of gout by drinking first-rate sherry at ninepence a bottle.



Amongst other poor Lords, the Earl of Barrenmuir deserves notice, for he is a Scotchman, and Scotchmen are exempt from the reproof of non-

chivalrousness which attaches to English peers. Lord Barrenmuir's ancestors were Highland cut-throats and cow-stealers—neither better nor worse in this respect than all the other clans north of the Border. They were continually at feud with other clans; they robbed and fought, had the itch every man Jock of them, and got drunk whenever they could do so at their neighbours' expense. Three hundred years ago, when the larder at Barrenmuir was empty, the Countess used to serve up a pair of spurs in a dish, as a hint to her lord and his sons that they must shift for their next meal by going in quest of black Lowland cows; a century ago, the present Earl's grandfather was still resisting the advance of civilisation tooth and nail, and cursing the Hanoverian dynasty daily in the richest brogue.

These pious family recollections—which abound in all the great households of Caledonia—cause Scotch Lords to lift their heads high. They are parsimonious after the manner of their countrymen, but rudely hospitable; they husband their bawbees, but do not stint their liquor. The Earl (or Thane) of Barrenmuir resides on his Scottish estate and never travels to London, for he is not a peer of the United Kingdom, and cannot afford to become a representative peer of Scotland. There is nothing





LORD BARRENMUIR AND FAMILY ON THEIR WAY TO KIRK.

mean in his poverty, for he attempts to make no show. He supervises the breeding of his cattle, sends the game on his estate to market, collects his rents in person, and eats sheep's-head for dinner more often than roast-beef. His tenants, dependents, and all the county families still look up to him with reverence as the chief of a great clan; and it detracts not from his magnificence that he should have nothing better than a battered old coach, drawn by a pair of plough-horses and driven by the gardener, in which to send his wife when she pays her New Year's visits.

Every Sunday Lord Barrenmuir and his red-haired family, some dozen strong, walk to the parish kirk, and listen patiently to the hour and a half's sermon which the minister preaches; nor does the Earl omit to argue the theological points of it with the preacher over a bottle of whisky later in the afternoon. He is a rigid Presbyterian, a Tory, and a thoroughly well-read shrewd nobleman, though not a jocular one. Immensely proud of his rank—though patriarchally so and without conceit—he recognises the duties which it lays on him, and is a kind husband, father and landlord, as well as a stanch fireside politician. He and a French Legitimist Marquis would understand and esteem each other immediately; but it is not easy to specify the

kind of foreigner who could admire Lord Gryle and Grissle or Lord Bagobones.

There is no need to say much about the poor Irish Lord, for the only paupers in Ireland are the peasants and the village schoolmasters. The rest of the people have enough for their needs. If here and there you meet with an impoverished Lord, he exhibits no characteristics that can distinguish him from the ordinary ruck of his countrymen. English education has given him a kind of varnish, and native wit prevents him from ever seeming quite so poor as he really is. He is more addicted to doing wild things than a poor English Lord. He will entangle himself in disreputable law-suits, or get his name bandied about in connection with a promise to marry a widow of forty-five. He is often a place-hunter, and a writer for the newspapers. Generally he ends by recovering affluence with a suddenness which none can explain. It would be too much to affirm that this suddenness had invariably something honest at the bottom of it.

XII.

VIRTUOSO LORDS.

Music and the drama have so many votaries in the peerage that, if it had pleased these Noble Lords to club their resources and make an appeal to other plutocrats, they might long ago have established a national opera and national theatres in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. They have done nothing so patriotic, and will see the British public hanged before they go out of their way to amuse or instruct it. The system of party government, as carried out amongst us, obliges the governing classes to resist all endeavours of the people to give themselves refining amusements out of the public money.

Most rational people are agreed that there should be in the capitals of the three kingdoms a state theatre, devoted to performances of the best plays in the British repertory and to the encouragement of modern dramatists; but who would dare to propose a grant for such establishments? If the Liberals did so, the Conservatives would withstand the innovation, with the entire clergy at their backs, in the name of

public morals; if the Conservatives made the attempt, the Liberals would raise a yell that the working man's money was being taken to provide amusements for the upper and middle classes, who could well afford to pay for their own amusements. The Opposition would, in either of these cases, emit sentiments wonderfully true and just. The Liberals especially could make a telling point by contrasting the public-spirit-edness of the patriciates of Rome and Venice with the selfishness of the British nobility; and by pointing out that, if the latter are really anxious to see the national drama properly enthroned amongst us, the correct way of setting to work would be first to build the theatres, and then ask Parliament to endow them, a proposal which would probably be refused with unanimity.

State theatres will doubtless be built at last; but not in the days of primogeniture and entail. When the breaking up of colossal estates restores the yeoman class and diffuses wealth more equally throughout the land, those who remain very rich—and they will be mostly manufacturers and bankers—will stand on a more level footing with the rest of the community, and be more sensibly disposed to make common cause with it for the promotion of the general well-being. At present the peers are so rich that they can satisfy any artistic whim out of their own pockets, and see no

use in calling upon the vulgar to participate in their enjoyments. They take their pleasures selfishly among themselves, and bar out all who are not of their own 'sets.'

The Earl of Doubleday is one of the most *virtuoso* creatures alive. He has a picture-gallery, which would be the pride of a public museum, and he admits none but his friends to see it; he spends thousands of pounds yearly on statues and rare pieces of furniture, ancient tapestry, china, and armour; but once these treasures of art have crossed his threshold they are as good as interred so far as the public eye is concerned. The Duke of Buildingland is another proprietor of wondrous art-treasures; but his noble father would never allow the public to visit them, because, said he, the boots and shoes of the multitude played havoc with his carpets.

If the works of art which grace the galleries of these and a hundred other British peers were put under one roof, the result would be a collection more splendid than could be formed out of all the continental museums combined. Let it be recollected that every war and revolution which has disturbed the Continent for the last ninety years has caused art-treasures to flow towards England, where alone there remained money enough to buy them. France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland, and Germany have suc-

cessively been convulsed by disasters which left their aristocracies too poor to keep treasures that were not of gold. But the British aristocracy never grew poor; it bought up pictures and statues as fast as they appeared; and once these marvels entered the country they were never suffered to go out again.

The public have no conception of the artistic wealth which the British nobility have entombed—entombed as completely as if the lava of Vesuvius had buried it all in Pompeii. Sometimes, indeed, it will happen that a Noble Lord will, after much pressing solicitation, lend his pictures for a week or two to the South Kensington Museum; but the loan is always made grudgingly, with an amount of fuss intended to enhance the condescension of it, and it never includes the gems of the owner's collection. The noble example which Sir Richard Wallace set by inaugurating the Bethnal Green Museum was generally scouted as truckling to advanced ideas, and thoroughly 'bad form.' So far from being desirous of propagating the culture of art, the lordly picture-owners of Britain will not hear of allowing their pictures to be copied; so that, when a fire takes place (as at Blenheim and Warwick Castle within recent years), many a painting which copies might have immortalised is burned out of men's very memories.

So far is this dog-in-the-manger spirit pushed that

England is the only country in Europe which has not a single creditable provincial museum; and this though it has a dozen provincial cities wealthier than most foreign capitals. There are millions of Englishmen, Scots, and Irishmen who have not the faintest conception of what art means; for they can never see a decent painting or piece of sculpture, unless they travel to London. Some of the richest Lords actually have the face to bid against the trustees of the National Gallery; and many a snug job has been privately carried out between Commissioners of Works and grasping peers who coveted such and such a costly painting for their own private galleries. Speaking generally, it may be said that the pictures which find their way into the national museums are those which Noble Lords did not consider worth buying.

The Earl of Doubleday loves music as well as art, and is a regular *habitué* of the Opera. But it hurts his lordship to hear the best songstresses warble out their notes for the uncouth public ear. His idea of musical enjoyment is to have quiet concerts in his own drawing-room, and to hear Mesdames Patti, Nilsson, and Albani sing him songs which they sing nowhere else, set to music composed on purpose for him by geniuses who make him dedications of their productions.

It destroys all this grand signor's relish in a

pleasure to see the rest of mankind taste of it. He so hates the multitude that, being possessed of a handsome Opera-house, he kept it closed for years sooner than reduce the heavy rent he asked for it a single penny. He could well have afforded to let the place for nothing, for he has 300,000*l.* a year; and if he had been the art-patron he pretends to be, one might have thought he would have gladly seized on this opportunity of enabling an operatic manager to collect an incomparable troupe, and organise a brilliant season, with a mind exempt from pecuniary cares. But in the way of music Lord Doubleday holds, with most other peers, that after all there is none like the chinking of gold. If the pompous, over-fed, over-millions creature could make a little money by debarring the public from any form of intellectual enjoyment, he would not scruple to try; he would not care if all the fiddles in Europe were broken, so long as four remained to gratify him with sonatas from Beethoven in his back drawing-room after dinner.

Lord Feedham is another type of the dramatic *virtuoso*; and this one went the length of building a theatre, and fitting it up with violet velvet, satin, and gold. But he did these things for Miss Kitty Wren, who was jealous of Miss Maggie Starling, for whom Lord Kute had erected a playhouse, furnished with blue and silver. Lords Feedham and Kute are, or



LORD DOUBLEDAY'S AFTER-DINNER DIVERSION.

II. 150.

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were, passionately fond of songs, breakdowns, and jingling music; but they were fonder of Miss Wren and Miss Starling respectively; so it came to pass that these damsels, having a theatre apiece, proceeded each to make her boards serve to her own glorification, and no one else's. At the Doric, Miss Wren covered herself with as many diamonds and as few clothes as possible, and sang out of tune; Miss Starling kicked up her heels at the Ionic; and at



both houses the manageresses would not hear of engaging actresses who were better performers than they.

It has often been asked why the British stage is in such a degraded condition, and the writers of those cautious organs, the daily newspapers, have offered a variety of specious explanations of the thing. But they would not venture on exposing the real truth, which is this: that Noble Lords, with more money than brains or good breeding, put a high premium on dramatic dulness by pitchforking any personable wench who hits their fancy into the position of manageress, giving her *carte blanche* to hire other disorderly wenches, and to put upon the stage what musical inanities and turpitudes she pleases.

In Paris, public opinion would revolt at this outrage upon decency, and pelt the disreputable play and players off the boards with baked apples. But who would dare to pelt the *protégée* of a British Noble Lord? The audience who fill the well-cushioned seats of these theatrical bagnios stare with ecstasy at the gaudy trappings on the walls and the women; they ogle the Misses Wren and Starling with a prurient curiosity and secret admiration of their good luck. If any one dared to hiss he would speedily find himself in the street, attended by a policeman, who would charge him with being drunk and rampageous.

Lord Jollyand is at once a better *virtuoso* and a truer gentleman than any of the peers aforementioned; but he too has finikin ways of supporting art which would surprise an Italian prince with but a tenth of his income. He is a bit of a violinist himself, and delights in gathering instrumentalists in his palatial mansion, where he surfeits them with good cookery.



After dinner he and they go to work with fiddle and bow, to the ravishment of a select circle of admirers, who never fail to remark, in stage whispers, that if his lordship had not been born with a coronet, the

highest rank as a musician would have been within his reach.

Perhaps it might have been. Anyhow he recognises his fellowship with all wind and string performers by relieving such of them as pretend to be starving, or really are so. He is the friend of the Italian organ-grinder and the enemy of Mr. Bass. He vouchsafes his patronage to concerts organised by *débutantes*, and spoils many a tranquil governess by discerning in her the promise of a splendid voice, and having her half-educated for the stage, where she howls once or twice and then vanishes, none missing her. Lord Jollyand is rather a patron of bad musicians than of good, for the bad flatter him best. He was once heard to say that he wished the English working man could be induced to play on the fiddle like the German, or sing at his work like the Italian; but he does nothing to further this consummation by promoting any national scheme of training in music. At heart he loathes the working classes as heartily as Lord Doubleday—rather more, perhaps, for he regards them as Vandals and Philistines, with souls wilfully averse from refinement. However, on the whole he is as worthy a specimen of the benevolent *virtuoso* as may be found in the upper ranks of Britain.

XIII.

MISERLY PEERS AND PEERS PARTIALLY INSANE.

Stinginess is a vice or principle, avarice is a form of madness. There are plenty of Noble Lords who are stingy from instinct, or because it does not suit them to be liberal. The record of those who have been downright misers is not a long one, though this may be owing less to the actual scarcity of the species than to the extreme bashfulness of the British public in chronicling the foibles of their nobility. Forty years ago a famous French miser, the Marquis d'Aligre, was the talk of all Paris; a miserly English lord would at most become a butt for the ridicule of a very small and select circle of equals. The mass of the people would not dare to allude to his infirmity above a whisper.

Considering that a semi-lunatic Lord is still allowed to legislate, to retain his magisterial functions, or his post of Lord Lieutenant of a county and Chairman of Quarter Sessions, to laugh at him publicly would, for several cogent reasons, be highly inexpedient. The crack-brained magnate might vent his wrath with surprising virulence by foully slandering the jokester till he was ruined; if he mur-

dered the man, he would incur nothing worse than to be relegated to a private house under charge of a doctor, and public opinion would, in its deep sympathy for the maniacal peer, decide that the deceased had got no more than he deserved.

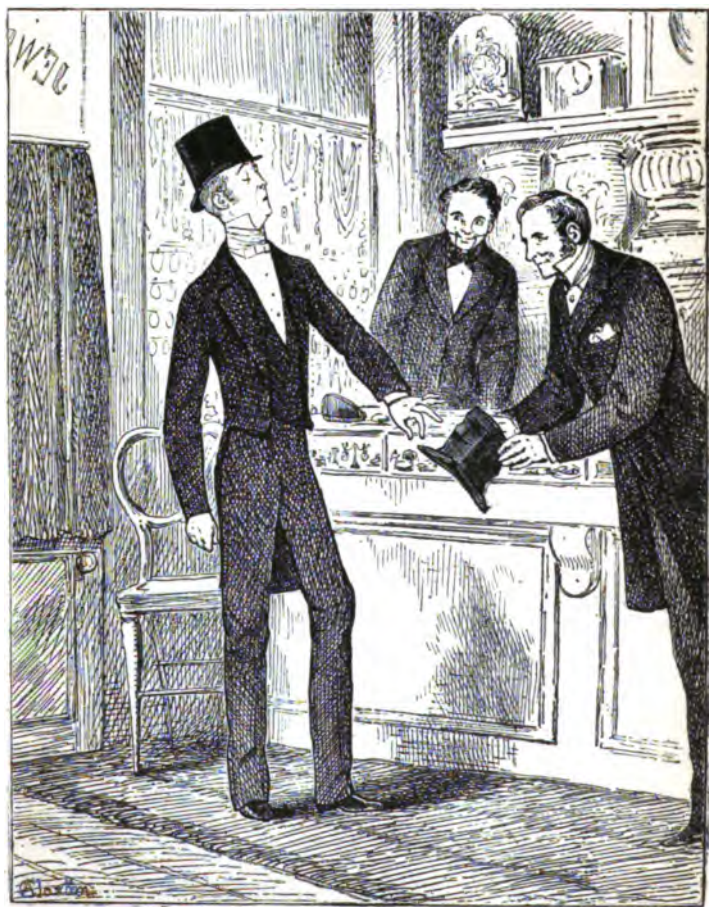
It is pretty well ascertained nowadays that many of the bloodthirsty kings of antiquity and the Middle Ages—Nero, Commodus, Caligula, Heliogabalus, King John, Ivan the Terrible, and others—were stark mad; and when the history of the British peerage comes to be impartially written, the taint of insanity will be affixed to the acts of many a Noble Lord, who, during his lifetime, was held to possess all the acumen and wisdom requisite for his rank. These noble dolts are not often bloodthirsty. Some of them have been kleptomaniacs, and hid away a good deal of pelf before their propensity was even suspected; others have been dipsomaniacs, whose minds were perennially steeped in port and brandy; others doxomaniacs of the quarrelsome sort, who were devoured by ambition to domineer over people and manage their business for them; others, again, have been mere imbeciles.

The misers form a separate class, for avarice is not incompatible with a vast amount of shrewdness—witness Elwes, the miser, who sat in Parliament for twelve years, and was a thoroughgoing patriot, who

never let his private mania warp his judgment on the subject of taxes, but voted without grumbling for all the imposts needed to carry on wars abroad. A similar creature, whom we will call Lord Bunborough, was also mighty shrewd in his way, and could give the soundest advice to people in difficulties. A wag, once took him by his weak side, and asked him for a guinea. My lord bounced, and told him to go and be ——. ‘Half a guinea, then?’ begged the wag, with a whine. ‘Not a shilling,’ bawled his lordship furiously. At last, the suppliant having reduced his demands to a penny, which was likewise refused, laughed, and said that he had been joking, for all he wanted was a piece of advice. ‘Let me hear what you have to say, then,’ said the Lord, appeased. ‘Pause a minute,’ replied the wag: ‘if your advice had been worth a penny you would not have given me that either.’

At the time of the Queen’s coronation, the peers all sent their hats to Storr & Mortimer’s, the Court jewellers, that the measurement of their heads might be taken for the coronets which they were to wear at the ceremonial. Lord Bunborough’s hat was sent too, but it was in such a lamentable condition of naplessness, greasiness, and batter, that a shopman, finding it on the floor, where it had rolled off a counter, thought it must be a headdress that had

been thrown there for fun by a shopboy of facetious turn, and had it kicked into the dusthole. By and by Lord Bunborough's valet returned for his master's hat, which was hunted for in vain, till his description of it led to its being identified with the



hat in the dusthole. The valet was rather glad, for he hoped the misadventure would induce my lord to purchase a new headdress; but he little knew the close-fisted peer, who, on hearing of what had happened, said simply, 'Have the hat picked out of the dusthole, and take it to be cleaned—but at the jeweller's expense, mind.'

This legendary hat was worn till the date of the Queen's marriage in 1840. On this occasion Lord Bunborough, having been invited to Windsor, was positively forced to rig himself out anew. He did so with infinite compunction, as may be supposed, and actually wore his new hat eleven years. In 1851, the Exhibition year, having made up his mind that he must pay another visit to his hatter's, he entered the Bond-street shop with the dismal exclamation: 'Here I am again!'

It was Lord Bunborough who, passing through Oxford-street on a cold winter day, heard a baked-potato vendor call to a boy to mind his can for five minutes, promising him 'a penn'orth hot' as a recompense. The boy had something else to do, so Lord Bunborough volunteered his services. He stood by the can *ten minutes*, and when the vendor returned, remarked to him: 'I have waited five minutes longer than you bargained for; I think you ought to give me two penn'orth!'

Lord Bunborough never married, reflecting, doubtless, that a wife is a costly encumbrance; his vast estates accordingly passed to a nephew, whom he rather liked, and whom he was continually trying to indoctrinate in the principles of economy. Calling one evening on the scapegrace, who had chambers in the Albany, he began to lecture him as usual on the benefit of rigid parsimoniousness. 'See, for instance, what a waste is here,' said he, pointing to a pair of wax-candles that were burning together. 'We are burning fire and lights for nothing. Let us walk about and talk in Pall Mall.'

Miserly Lords are much better off in England than misers in other parts of the world; for Englishmen are so glad to have a Lord to dinner, that a close-fisted peer can live at free quarters by strolling from the house of one acquaintance to another. Lord Bunborough put his servants on board-wages, and had no food in his house but sailor's biscuit and tea, which he made for himself, and drank without milk or sugar. Towards midday he would set out on a ramble, and get his dinner at the table of one of his farmers or cottagers, or drop in as though for lunch at the house of one of the neighbouring gentry. He was not proud as to whose dinner he ate—the cold bacon and beans of the labourer pleased him equally with the hashed mutton of the



parish clergyman. He had so many acquaintances and dependents that he seldom taxed the hospitality of any one more than three times in one year, but among them all he contrived to live for nothing.

Needless to add that the game on the estate of this magnanimous nobleman, the fruit of his orchard, the vegetables in his garden were all sold. He kept nothing for himself, and gave nothing away. If a peasant-boy had robbed him of an apple, he would not have prosecuted, but he would have requested the lad's parents to pay the value of the damage. It was said that Lord Bunborough only had one pocket-handkerchief after the miserly fit had fallen on him towards his twenty-second year; and that one was discovered in the pocket of a second-hand pair of trousers he had bought of an old-clothesman.

XIV.

STOCK EXCHANGE LORDS.

It is contrary to etiquette that a peer should be a registered stockbroker; but nothing hinders him from selling scrip by deputy, nor is there anything to prevent him from selling worthless scrip. Peers have dabbled considerably in all the Stock Exchange movements of the last fifty years. Railways, foreign loans, and joint-stock companies innumerable have been honoured by having them on their boards of directors; and the public have been honoured by not unfrequently seeing them grow rich with the shareholders' money.

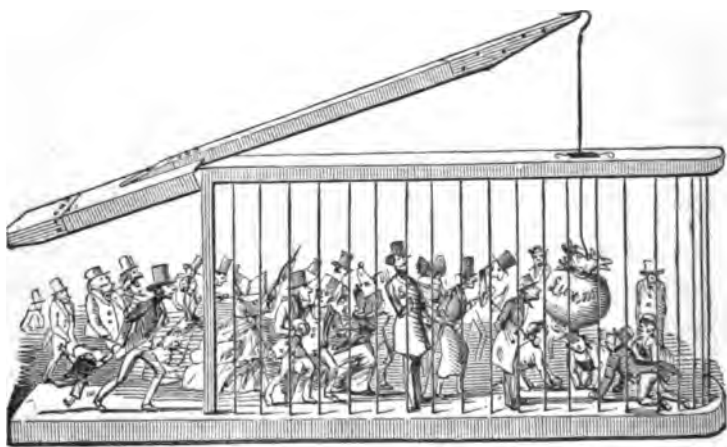


The reader who has perused the preceding pages will not be surprised that no peer should ever have come to such signal grief in courts of justice as certain other directors and promoters have done. Given the sturdy strength of the peerage, as already explained, a Noble Lord has not only the power to shield himself from the irate prosecutions of despoiled shareholders, but he can also throw the cloak of impunity over his co-directors who are not peers.

How often have we heard that such and such a body of persons were inexorably bent upon bringing such and such a board of joint-stock impostors to justice! The prosecution was threatened with a loud bellowing of big words; it started, it limped, and broke down. Very often has this happened, and the reason was a sweetly simple one—there was some Noble Lord in the business, who, either to save himself or his relatives, had set his influence at work. A very notorious financier, who on more than one occasion has danced suspiciously near to the precipices of the criminal court, was humorously asked whether he was not afraid of ending his days with swindlers at Portland. ‘O, no, I shall have better company than that,’ said he; ‘for on the day when I go there twelve peers at least will have to go with me.’

No wonder peers should be at a premium for directing companies. If a Noble Lord’s character can

bear anything like the test of scrutiny—and so long as he is not on the turf it generally can—he may command good terms for letting his name be put on a prospectus. His patronage means success. What a peer offers for sale the public will buy; and if they



are ruined it will console them greatly to hear that his lordship is a fellow-sufferer in pocket. Noble Lords always pretend to be heavy losers by joint-stock directing, and people are to be met with who believe them.

Hotels, proprietary clubs, and aquariums are favourite ventures for noblemen with a taste for directing. They risk little or no money, the requisite number of qualifying shares, all paid up, being handed over to them as a gift. The chief service they render



THE STOCK EXCHANGE LORD.

II. 164.



to the concerns in which they are interested is to puff them in society, discreetly or loudly, according as may be required. Certain peers are the directors, or paid touts, of a dozen different speculations, and a few among these have an unquestionable talent for 'floating' an affair. It would be a wonder were it not so. Most of the speculations just mentioned depend for success on the support of those social circles where a Lord's word is omnipotent; and if you take a peer who is descended from a line of tradesmen, and in whom the generic instincts of the commercial traveller are still strong, you may imagine how briskly he goes to work in recommending a speculation in which he is interested.

The hotel-promoting peer is an especially keen customer. His hotel is always advertised to furnish the latest Parisian or American improvements. It has been erected in a fashionable watering-place, or in a watering-place which its erection is calculated to render fashionable: it boasts a '*recherchée* table d'hôte'; an unrivalled smoking-room, with a view of the sea; a private Turkish bath and a rink, a ladies' coffee-room and a spacious saloon suitable for corporation dinners, masonic balls, and wedding breakfasts. To prove its many advantages, the noble promoter lives in it himself during the first six months after its inauguration, and of course pays nothing for inhabiting

the best suite of rooms and drinking the choicest wines.

The friends whom he has cajoled into trying the place, the snobs who fly after noble company like moths at candle-light, keep the establishment pretty full during the inaugural period, before the plaster is yet dry, and whilst half the house is still in the hands of the decorators. But so soon as my Lord packs up his portmanteau the public flit likewise. The second season of the hotel is a dismal failure; and just about the time when the last workman has put the finishing touch to the spacious saloon in which nobody has yet dined or danced the hotel company is declared in process of being wound up.

For the next two or three years the big house remains empty; then the Noble Lord is applied to to make an attempt to galvanise the place into life by means of another company. This he prudently refuses to do, alleging many excellent reasons against hotel speculations, which would have been more timely had he put them forward when the original scheme was launched. He consents, however, to act as chief negotiator in a project for transforming the desolate building into a charitable institution—asylum, hospital, or school; and out of this transaction he again reaps money.

Money is the wire that makes us all cut capers,

fleshly puppets that we are, so there is nothing strange in the propensity of Noble Lords to turn an honest thousand or two out of hotels or aquariums ; but what shall be said of the peer who employs all his influence to float a knavish loan, contracted by the knavish agents of a yet more knavish foreign State ? The Foreign Loans Committee published some queer revelations anent the share taken by stockbrokers, accredited diplomatists, and the rascally City editors of daily newspapers in promoting these swindles ; but, as usual, not a word was said about the share of Noble Lords. Yet without the active coöperation of Noble Lords none of these loans, issued by bankrupt States, could have obtained a quotation.

When the Republic of Rio-Brigande, for instance, called upon the British capitalist to help it construct a line of rail from its seaboard to a gold-mine which had no existence, could not a hundred peers have shown up the imposture if they had not known that two or three of their order were interested in seeing the British capitalist hoaxed ? The Republic of Rio-Brigande had over and over again been bankrupt. Fully a dozen times had its legislature declared solemnly that a free State was not bound to pay its debts ; twenty-five times in nineteen years had its president been deposed by an insurrectionary *junta* ; five other presidents had been murdered ; civil war

was the chronic condition of the country; and British emigrants who had been tempted to visit the country always returned thence just as they came, minus the money they had carried with them in their pockets.

There was not a geographer but knew that there was just about as much chance of finding a gold-mine in Rio-Brigande as in Soho-square; and not a traveller, statesman, or banker of repute, but could have informed the public that money subscribed to construct a railway in this precious republic would be distributed among the gang of cut-throat scoundrels who happened to be in office at the time when it came out there. Nor could any of the promoters be ignorant of how matters stood, for the loan was issued on such conditions as would have rendered it impossible for it to be repaid even if a dozen honest men had miraculously started up to take the affairs of the cranky State in hand.

Out of 4,000,000*l.* nominally subscribed not more than 1,500,000*l.* was really culled from the public pocket, and of this sum about two-thirds were distributed in commission-fees among the noble and ignoble promoters, among newspaper writers, and in expenses for advertisements. Perhaps 500,000*l.* actually found its way to the Rio-Brigande, whose representatives became saddled

with the obligation to pay eight per cent interest from that time forth upon the whole 4,000,000*l.*, *i. e.* 320,000*l.* a year! Admitting, as above said, that Heaven had taken pity upon the country, and unexpectedly conjured up a dozen honest men to rule it, how could these unfortunates have afforded to pay 320,000*l.* a year for a loan of 500,000*l.*? The entire revenue of the country, set down in the prospectuses at 5,000,000*l.*, hardly amounted to 200,000*l.* The customs duties and the tobacco-tax, which had been pledged to the bondholders in guarantee for the interest, and which were stated to yield between them 2,000,000*l.* sterling, produced in reality, the first, about 30,000*l.*, the latter, nothing, for no Rio-Brigandian had yet been found who would consent to pay tax upon his tobacco.

• It consequently happened that the 500,000*l.* became a toothsome prey to his excellency the president and his right honourable adorers, and led to a civil war, in which the opposition, who wanted their share of the spoil, issued virtuous proclamations, and urged on the common people to fight like men against the rulers who were robbing them. As soon as the virtuous opposition were installed in the Government they took what was left of the money and bolted with it. There are a dozen Rio-Brigandian statesmen living at this moment in European

capitals on the proceeds of the loan which the British public guilelessly subscribed for them.

A commission was appointed by Parliament some time ago to inquire into the working of the Stock Exchange; but the heads of the whole commission might have been wagered against a dozen of turnips that my Lords Capelcourt, Conyngcove, and Mostyn-fylch, who were the chief organisers of the Rio-Brigande loan, would never be called up and examined. Not they, forsooth!



XV.

LITERARY LORDS.

If literary talent be what most great writers say it is—education backed by hard work—the peerage ought to produce good writers by the score; for their lordships have not only the means of being better educated than any other set of men, but they have also leisure enough to turn their knowledge to good account. It so happens, however, that since Lord Byron's death not a peer has produced a book that will be read in the next century. Lords Macaulay, Lytton, and Beaconsfield are not cases to the point, for they were ennobled for the good work (rather political than literary) which they did as commoners. Lord Derby's translation of the *Iliad* was a fair prosy composition, already forgotten; Lord Houghton's poems (written when the author was Mr. Monckton Milnes) are specimens of easy, sometimes graceful, versification, which, at the best, rank his lordship many degrees below Browning the incomprehensible, Swinburne the redundant, and Lord Lytton II. the adapter (without permission) of French idylls. The Marquis of Lorne and the Earl of Southesk have

written verses which nobody has read. The late Earl Stanhope indited an incomparably dull history of part of the eighteenth century; and the present Earl of Pembroke has penned an agreeable book of travels, in company with a doctor, who perhaps composed the best of it. Lord Dunraven has also written a good book of travels; Lord Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes* are not unworthy the descendant of Sheridan; and Lord Talbot de Malahide's antiquarian essays are very readable. These works may be said to sum up the literary budget of the peers and their offspring during the Victorian era.

Not but that other Lords have tried their hands at writing, and have been loudly complimented by reviewers. While Earl Stanhope lived, few dared to hint that he was not the equal, and the providentially appointed successor, of Macaulay. He had access to valuable State documents, and to private family correspondence, out of which a clever workman could have woven a truly good history. But Lord Stanhope dared not make use of his facts lest they should offend other Noble Lords. When dealing with a noble trickster of Queen Anne's reign, who had descendants alive, he touched him tenderly with the feathery side of his quill. He had no gift of irony or humour, no eye for a point, no comprehension of a joke. A cathedral verger, who should write

the history of a departed dean and chapter out of documents furnished him by these reverend gentlemen's grandchildren, who had stipulated for the right to amend this verger's proof-sheets, would produce just such a sapless, awe-stricken, word-involved book as that which earned for my Lord Stanhope laurels never reaped by Tacitus and Livy during their lifetimes.

Lord Stanhope, however, did deserve a modest literary name, for he worked his best; and it was only the fault of innate dulness, and of the social pusillanimity inherent to his rank, which prevented him from turning out more creditable work. He was so ploddingly industrious that, if he had not been a peer, he might have become an ornament to the editorial staff of the *Quarterly Review*. Perhaps the stings of critics might even have roused him out of his dulness.

The average literary peer is not industrious, for he seldom writes for money; which does not mean that he declines payment for his effusions, but simply that he is not driven to quill-driving by penury. He writes lazily for amusement, or because he wishes to air some of his notions on things in general. As he is never compelled to serve that apprenticeship of 'rejected contributions' which teaches patience and style to humble writers—for who would refuse the

contributions of a Lord?—he fancies that a man has only to let his pen run to produce readable matter. His unchastened prose never improves: when the awkwardness of youth wears off it, much of youthful freshness wears off too, and a flippant slovenliness becomes its chief characteristic.

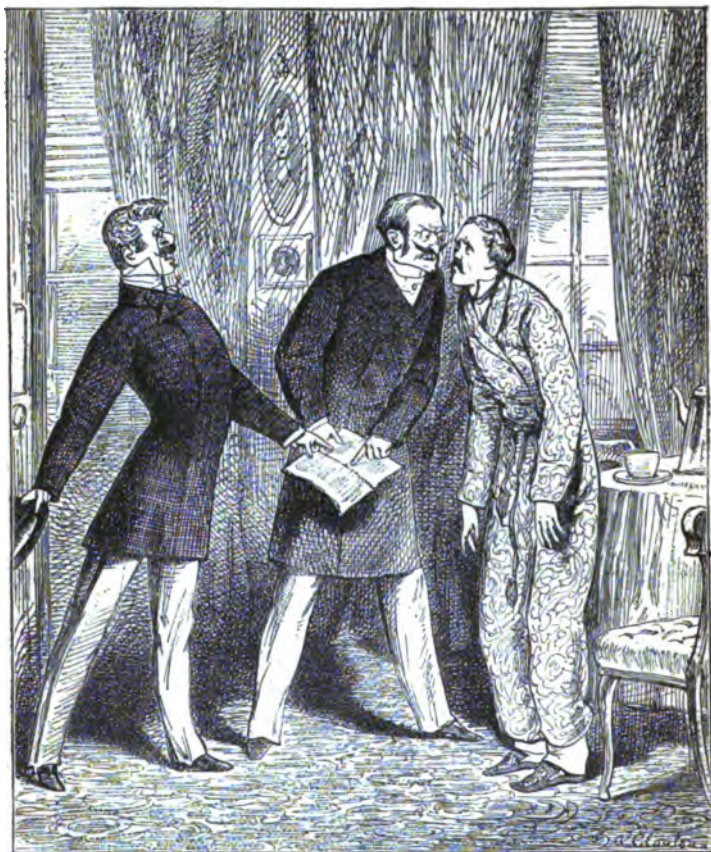
Readers of sporting papers or 'Journals of Society' will occasionally wonder who is that rampageously jocose and self-asserting contributor, who writes in slipshod English, and gives one the idea of a spaniel puppy chasing his own tail in the sunlight. He is well informed as to the doings of Mayfair and Belgravia; he alludes to coming marriages; indulges in a good deal of larking chaff about Society personages unknown to the million, but whom he designates by their Christian names abbreviated; and his passing references to persons and places show him to be an *habitué* of clubs and drawing-rooms, where the vulgar have no entry, except as footmen. This versatile journalist is generally a Noble Lord enjoying himself in print.

Editors make much of him, for the special information he brings is often valuable; and his articles, when slightly touched up by a practised hand, may be made to read very amusingly. It has been noticed, however, that these contributors seldom remain long attached to the same journal; for if once their iden-

tity gets suspected they take fright and run away. More than one editor who has not been able to resist the temptation of bruiting the fact that he had a Lord on his staff has paid for his indiscretion by seeing his noble quilled bird waddle off cackling and hissing flurried protests.

It is considered derogatory to the dignity of a peer that he should mix in journalism otherwise than as contributor to *The Times* of letters on political economy or the cattle plague, duly signed with his name and dated from his country-seat. He may also write ponderous articles in select reviews. Still, the younger sons of small peers are tolerated in journalism after a fashion ; although they are expected to be very reticent about their literary occupations when dining with their elder brothers and other superiors.

Not ten years ago a noble Irish Earl, too young to be very cautious, got himself into sad pickle by hinting at some Society secrets in a magazine edited by a lady. He was assailed by the wrath of a Duke's son, and an Irish colonel, connected with some other peer, sent him a challenge to fight. The Earl had to retract and eat humble-pie. It was said that he showed the white feather. The real truth is that he had discovered what a mistake it was to rush into the hornet's-nest of aristocratic resentment. Doubtless his lordship's family solicitor read him a respectful



lecture on his rashness. He has learned wisdom and has not written *à la* Chesterfield since.

Another noble Earl is recognised as a journalistic authority on sporting matters, as he ought to be, having run through a fortune on the turf. This one is full of anecdotes, chiefly about himself. He

does not sign his articles, but continually alludes to himself by his full titles. If descanting on the points of a horse, he compares it to one that formerly graced his own stable; if praising a jockey, he says that the best guarantee of his worth is that he once carried the Earl of So-and-So's colours; every race he describes reminds him of one in which the afore-said Earl either lost money or won some.

Poetical withal, he quotes humorous doggrel of his own with a staggering self-appreciation not allowed to meaner mortals; he also goes far, and frequently out of his way, to quote old jokes which he made at Tattersall's or in the House of Lords. This noble Earl is exceedingly touchy about editorial reproof. Suppress a line of what he writes, and you see the last of him. He is believed to earn 500*l.* a year by his sporting letters.

Few Noble Lords venture on novel-writing. One or two are reported to have tried the thing under assumed names; but have recoiled in disgust and terror on finding the whole pack of critics rise at them barking and biting. Lord Beaconsfield and the late Lord Lytton of course excepted, the only peer who has had the courage to publish novels under his real name is that same young Earl who had to eat the Irish colonel's humble-pie. They were not good, but perhaps the coronet on the title-page made

them seem even worse than they were. One opened the volumes, expecting, rather too inconsiderately, to find original views about high life, and one discovered—*vocem et præterea nihil*. One felt, however, that the author was eager to say more than he put in print. To use his own tersely Irish way of expressing himself, ‘he would have liked to be bold if he had dared.’ Lord Willox, indeed, published both novels and reminiscences; the latter on the strength of his having been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Thunderbolt. He was, however, only a peer’s son, but he was a Noble Lord nevertheless, at least by courtesy.



XVI.

A FEW CLOSING WORDS ABOUT NOBLE LORDS.

Time would fail to speak of the legal luminaries who have enjoyed a dignified repose on the Wool-sack; of the peers who are intrusted with the great commands of the army, though they have never smelt powder; of Lord Pips filling one of our Vice-royalties, Lord Tuftly another, and Lord Panshanger, good honest man, a third. The connections of the late Earl Bustle alone who hold office, or have held it, would fill a good-sized sheet of foolscap, written out in a fine hand; and of foolscap such a record should be made, so that he, she, or they whom it fits may wear it. It would be hard to find a peer who has no finger in the public purse; and, indeed, there is no reason why a peer should not have the same chances of pay and distinction in his country's service as other folk. But it is dangerous and absurd to give employments of trust, honour, and emolument to any class of men, not because they deserve such rewards, but because they possess a title to which we have attached preposterous importance.

There are many good men in the peerage, and many wiser statesmen there than the House of Commons can show. Taking them all in all, they are a well-educated body of gentlemen—sharp in business, serviceable towards one another, and especially to

their own relatives, haughty as regards the rest of the world, and just what one might expect the members of a highly privileged and grossly over-flattered caste to be. The virtues which they may each and all individually possess are their own; their vices are less the result of their own fault than the fault of the society which cringes to them, and would only have itself to thank if they were all ten times worse than they are.

To expect collective wisdom, honour, disinterestedness, and patriotism from the British nobility, is to expect fruits to grow where they have not been planted. Flattery breeds conceit, wealth selfishness, power arrogance, and idleness vice; therefore all these failings are well represented in the House of Lords, much as it may distress the average Briton to hear such a thing stated in so rude terms. Nothing that has been here written is intended to point scorn at those of the Lords who have publicly evinced qualities worthy of their station; it is only contended that the characteristics of the peerage as a body—their public-spiritedness, liberality, graciousness, and talents—are *not* on a level with that which the public might reasonably expect from an order so rich and potent. In other words, the House of Lords is a great obstruction to popular progress in the British Kingdom.

YOUNG WIDOWS.



I.

THE ALBUM.



TURNING over the leaves of his photographic album, any man who has seen much of the world will most likely pause to contemplate the faces of some pretty women whose *carte-de-visite* portraits he has begged, bought, or filched, at epochs when he set more than ordinary value on them. The value of

such treasures may have been very transitory ; but the fact of their remaining in a collection proves that their owner's acquaintanceship with the originals cannot have terminated disagreeably, for men throw the photograph of a jilt into the fire ; and it proves again that the intercourse cannot have been of a culpable character, else the tell-tale likenesses would not be left in a book exposed to all prying eyes. Who, then, are the women who are neither a man's



sisters nor cousins, nor faithless sweethearts or naughty *protégées*, but whose comely features yet call up a smile with a train of pleasant thoughts ?

The majority of them are simply Young Widows ;



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM.

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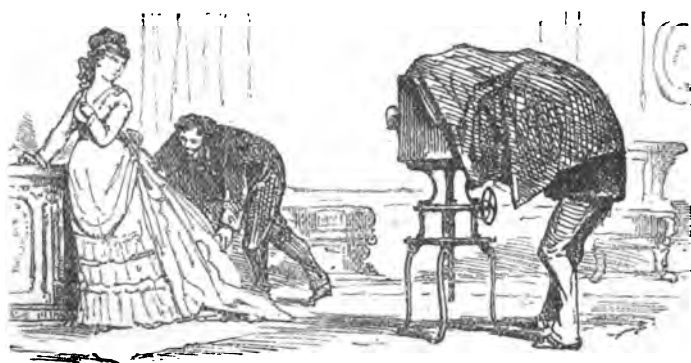
whose acquaintance one has made at various times, either at home or abroad.

The pretty face first encountered in a continental railway-carriage, and which led to such a delightful friendship of a fortnight's duration at Ems or Spa; the fair stranger whose lap-dog one saved from drowning in the Lake of Geneva; the blue-eyed autocrat who held one in servitude during an entire homeward journey from India; the lady whose horse bolted in Rotten Row; the charming widow at Leamington who had such an angelic little girl,—all these, with many more, have found a place in the album, and the recollections which they conjure up are among the most entertaining in life.

There are portraits which make a comparatively young man feel aged when he gazes upon them; and others which cause a pricking as of an old wound imperfectly healed. There are faces which evoke remorse; and others of which a man says, as he scans each never-to-be-forgotten lineament, 'No woman will ever again make me feel what I felt for HER!' But seriousness and sadness are out of place in musing over those apparitions which flashed upon one for a brief space in life's toilsome journey. They are the butterflies of a summer's day—the sunbeams occasionally dancing across a path which, but for them, might have been dark and lonesome.

And since sunbeams are our simile, let it be remarked that science, which dissects everything, has found means to prove that even sunbeams are not all alike in their composition. They differ in their properties of warmth and strength; some contain more colouring matter than others, and paint with a ruddier glow the flowers which they meet on their way; as we see in the petals of tropical plants, which far out-dazzle the pale growths of northern climes. So it is with the more or less brilliant women of whom we are treating here; for while some touch the memories of those who have known them with tints too light to shine long, others leave behind them hues of enduring vividness. Of these a man may sometimes be tempted to reflect that it was well he did not remain exposed to the ardent beams too long, or he would have been scorched.

This said, let us look through the album together.



II.

INTERESTING YOUNG WIDOWS.

We pass over several of our album's leaves, and light upon the delightfully girlish face of a young woman dressed in a riding-habit, who, although certainly twenty-five, looks no more than eighteen. The small man's-hat, perched so coquettishly over her brow, shades a brace of eyes sparkling with good-humour; the lips are half parted in a smile of innocent fun; the delicately shaped nostrils appear to breathe, with undisguisable relish, the air of liberty. In truth, this photograph was taken just two years after Mrs. Prettie had been left a widow.

We have heard it said that another photograph (not in our possession), for which she sat whilst Mr. Prettie was alive, showed her under a much more dejected aspect, for Prettie was a tyrant of the sort who knew how to wring tears out of poor young women's eyes day after day for years: a fretful, waspish, dictatorial little man, with a sour face and a bilious heart, who was forty years old when he won his bride of seventeen, and took her from a quiet country parsonage to the dreary London mansion, which became thence-



forth a very prison to her. Whatever she said or did Prettie found fault with it. He allowed her no

authority over servants, and no personal liberty, and yet was continually blaming her in sententious lectures because she seemed unequal to the discharge of her duties as mistress of a house. Under pretence of indoctrinating her into these duties (which women learn fast enough if they are but allowed to have their own way), Prettie went over the tradespeople's, and even the washerwoman's, bills with her, standing by the table while she cast up the accounts with such trembling fingers and a head so flurried that she would make mistakes in her addition; whereupon, with a proud sneer of superiority, he would wonder when she could be brought to learn that two and two make four.

It was Prettie who gave orders to the cook, scolded the housemaid, fixed the time at which his wife was to take her drives, and would not so much as allow her to buy a dress for herself, he always choosing the materials, under the pretence that she had no taste. Moreover, this ape of a man took it into his head to be jealous, and drove his young wife almost wild by his sarcastic taxing speeches. No woman ever gave a husband less cause for disquiet than Mrs. Prettie, for she passed all her time planning how she might satisfy him; and there was not one of the six or seven scoldings, wherewith he favoured her daily, but she took penitently to heart, asking herself whether she could

ever be cured of her faults, and deserve the kind word for which she hungered. For six years this life of wretched slavery lasted, grinding all soul and spirit out of the young wife, who had ended by persuading herself, in a despondent resigned way, that life is truly a term of probation, during which people are not intended to be happy.

And yet, when Mr. Prettie died, his widow, who had patiently nursed him through his last illness, cried all the tears out of her woful blue eyes; and if the suttee custom had been in honour amongst us, she would have thought it the most natural thing in the world that she should ascend the funeral pyre, to go and submit to another term of bullying in the spheres where Prettie was probably waiting to rate her for some omitted minutiae in his obsequies. However, by her husband's death the Young Widow inherited 2000*l.* a year; and there were not wanting friends who explained to her that the late Prettie had not taken all the cakes and ale of life into the grave with him.

It was some time before the sense of her emancipation broke upon the widow; but when it did come it came with enchanting power. To go where she pleased unrestrained, to wear what dresses she liked, to laugh at her will, to do good with her money—for she was kind to a fault—were luxuries which she was





"AMONG THE WHISPERING WOODS OF ENGLISH SHIRES."

II. 191.

never tired of tasting. And just as the buds, long delayed in their bloom by a protracted winter, burst forth with surprising freshness at the first touch of warm weather, so beauty, grace, and wit shone out all together in Mrs. Prettie, till she heard men murmur—and not too low either—how lovely and gifted a woman she was.

This revelation must have been to her the most astonishing of all; for her husband had taught her to consider herself such a sorry dunce, such a hopeless little stick! But on these points also she soon learned that the world contained room for two opinions. In the sunny climes of southern Europe, where the vines grow and the olives ripen, among the whispering woods of English shires, and the tumbling waters of Scottish streams, she heard soft vows poured into her ear, and it became eventually a question of difficulty as to whom she should choose among the many who spoke to her in language so new and fair. No wonder that her first connubial venture had rendered her prudent.

She rented for a season an old manor-house on the Thames, and during the bright summer days she and a young unmarried sister and a schoolboy brother explored by themselves the more sequestered nooks of the river. When autumn arrived they set out on a round of travel. They wished to see all the



world, and were continually turning up in unexpected places. In the ruined Coliseum by moon-

light; in the shaded stalls of Spanish amphitheatres on bull-fight days; round the rouge-et-noir tables at Monaco, where they risked five-franc pieces, and always won; and up the snowy passes of Chamounix, the joyous trio could be met, revelling in their freedom like fawns in spring-time. Mrs. Prettie, as the matron of the party, played chaperon, settled the hotel-bills, and did not, perhaps, set her younger sister an example of the strictest economy; but she contrived to keep well within her income, while deriving from it every atom of gratification which money is capable of yielding.

She could not well have done better for herself or others, for she scattered gladness about her wherever she went; and with this reflection we leave her. It reached our ears not long ago that she had married her sister comfortably, set up her brother in life, and finally bestowed her own small hand upon a young and gay fellow, with an empty purse, but a large heart, whom she had selected, with the shrewd discrimination of Young Widows, for qualities which rendered him the direct antithesis of her first husband. Perhaps, if we had a mind to, we could find her address among the basking streets of a western sea-side town, where she is the mistress of a happy home and the mother of crowing children—who can never suspect what a different face their mother would be

now wearing if Providence had not summoned away the late Mr. Prettie before he had had time to refashion her amiable character in his own crooked mould.

The neighbouring photograph to Mrs. Prettie's is that of another Young Widow whose first marriage



was not a happy one; but Lady Fallowfield had not to complain of a husband who ill used her, for poor Sir John was the meekest mortal who ever bowed a quinquagenarian neck to uxorial yoke. Unfortun-

ately, he was struck by paralysis when his wife was only a little more than twenty, and after this calamity lingered for eight long years before he made her a widow.

They were eight years that would have stretched the patience of a saint. The invalid gradually dwindled into imbecility, and was nothing better than a living corpse. It was impossible to cure him; there was not even a hope that his reason might return; and his wife was fain to watch him die by inches, not daring to hope that his departure might be hastened, and yet unable to conceal from herself that every additional year of his useless existence was so much taken away from the time of peace which she might expect on earth.

She behaved admirably under the trying circumstances, the more so as she was not sustained by ardent religious charity, but simply by a strong well-knit idea of duty. By neglecting the poor cripple—nay, by leaving him to be tended by servants, as she might well have done without seeming to fail in wifely kindness—she would have been certain to see him die soon; but she would not stoop to such indirect complicity in the old man's extinction, and, constituting herself his nurse, tended, soothed him, and performed the most menial offices for him, as if he had been a child and she his mother. Doctors were at a loss for words in which to express their admiration

for a devotedness so rare and disinterested ; and they repeatedly assured her, by way of compliment, that it was she, and she alone, who was keeping her husband alive.

What would they have thought, however, had they known that, while the lamp of poor Sir John's life so feebly flickered that a breath would have been enough to put it out, Lady Fallowfield was in love with a man in every way worthy of her, and whom she would have married had she been free ? and that, moreover, by prolonging her husband's days, she destroyed her chance of a marriage with her lover, and indirectly caused his death ? for, not being rich, he was unable to wait for her beyond a certain time, and was compelled to seek service in an unhealthy tropical climate, where he died. There are deeds done in the light which the world calls heroism ; but there are others done in the dark which assuredly merit even a nobler name.

When the hour of Lady Fallowfield's release at last sounded, she was twenty-eight years of age, but looked five-and-thirty, and in mind she was even older than that. As a dead parasitical plant will impart its decay to the sapling round which it clings, so that moribund life which had been intertwined with the days of her youth had left on Lady Fallowfield many a symptom of moral blight. Had she been a devout Christian, the ordeal through which she had passed would have

purified her soul from all dross, and left her full of angelic serenity; but it has been remarked that her religious convictions were not strong—indeed, she was almost a sceptic. So that, finding no comfort in the reflection that good deeds do not miss their reward, she sat down fretfully to mourn over her wasted womanhood.

From the time of her husband's death a subtle, but steady, deterioration was observable in her character. The mainspring of her noble actions being gone, the mechanism which had moved with such beautiful regularity came to a standstill. One day she roused herself with the impassioned cry that she would not forego her share of love and happiness; she would try to forget the past like a hideous nightmare, and, since the springtide and the early summer of her life were gone, would make the best of what fine days still remained to her. So she went forth with renovated beauty, and hunted for a husband.

O, what a fall was there! To have been magnanimous, strong, and wise; to have braved temptation and walked unwaveringly true on the path of duty; and then, because, forsooth, the faith in her was not powerful enough to catch the echoes of the old man's blessing, sent to her from beyond the grave, to account all her life a loss, and to trample on the recollections of it which should have borne undying

fruit! Yet so it was; and Lady Fallowfield cast off her aureolas as if, during those splendid years of resignation, she had been but a common actress playing the part of a saint!

She became flaunting and noisy; she over-dressed—and, if the truth has been told, sometimes over-drunk—herself. She contracted a thirst for gaieties, and seemed bent upon making the whole of society talk about her wealth, extravagance, and flirting propensities. When people begin to squander that which they have taken a long time in amassing, they go to work at a prodigious rate: witness the misers who turn spendthrifts. But society—much kinder than one thinks—would not let the widow make ducks and drakes with her reputation; they alluded indulgently to her freaks as the eccentricities of an original, but grand, nature; and for a while Lady Fallowfield's strange doings were freely imitated in the circles where she had most influence, giddy flirts quoting her example to prove that women may be angels, and yet not straitlaced.

At last, however, a scandal transgressing the limits of what was permissible compelled the widow's truest friends to look grave, and rendered it desirable for her to take a change of air on the Continent. But even now, kind-hearted people—who, whatever may be thought, are often the rulers of



LADY FALLOWFIELD'S FLIRTING PROPENSITIES.



public opinion—declined to regard her as a reprobate, and maintained that her mind had been affected by the loss of the companion, who had drawn from her the best qualities that have growth in human nature.

In this judgment there was not mercy alone, but truth; for those who fall down a precipice have not the same possession of their faculties as when they stood securely at the top. When once the foot has slipped, who can tell what passes through the mind of the man or woman who is being hurried to destruction? Only those who have been seized with this vertigo of ruin *can* tell it.

So it came to pass that the circle of Lady Fallowfield's best acquaintances receded from her, and she fell into low company without seeming to be aware that the persons who now surrounded her, tricked and swindled her, were not of the sort among whom she had been accustomed to live. Drink had blunted her perceptions—for it was no longer possible to conceal that she drank—perhaps to drown the first shoots of remorse, perhaps because in the reckless life she led continual stimulants had become a necessity.

Later on it was rumoured that she had passed under the dominion of an Italian scamp, half actor, half sharper, who boasted of his conquest in low *cafés*, where he squandered the money with which



she lavishly supplied him. We remember to have seen the pair driving about in a barouche at the Cascine of Florence—he, saucy and ridiculous, like a beggar on horseback; she, red of face and dull-

eyed, but evidently besottedly proud of her disreputable moustached companion. A year later we encountered them again at Brussels. They had married by this time, and were staying at the Hôtel Bellevue, where Signor Galivanti's assumptions of grand-seigneurship amused the waiters, whilst his roysterous galivantings among the *corps de ballet* of the Théâtre de la Monnaie (in the stalls of which, on opera nights, he was always a conspicuous object) were said to drive his wife into jealous frenzies.

One evening, while the visitors at the Bellevue were seated at the *table d'hôte*, the hotel suddenly rang with fearful shrieks, mixed with volleys of execrations in a jargon of Italianised English. All the men rose from table and trooped out into the corridor, where some waiters had already opened the door of one of the ground-floor sitting-rooms, whence the sounds of strife proceeded. There, scattered upon the floor, were the ruins of the dinner-table, which had been overturned; and, crouching among the broken plates, with her hair down her back, and her red face bathed with the tears wrung from physical pain, appeared Lady Fallowfield, while Signor Galivanti stood jabbering over her with a riding-whip.

Sir John Fallowfield's widow had got tipsy again, and her scoundrelly husband had thrashed her!

III.

GAY YOUNG WIDOWS.

Voltaire, in *Zadig*, tells an interesting story of how his hero pretended to have died in order to test the fidelity of his widow. The lady wept disconsolately for a whole day, vowing that she could not survive her lord. On the second day a handsome young clergyman came to console her, and she wept less; on the third day she and the divine had already formed matrimonial projects, which were only cut short by Zadig's timely resurrection. Zadig, as a philosopher, ought to have known better than to put his wife to a hazardous test; but having once done so, he was quite right to bear his disappointment with the equanimity which he seems to have shown.

Women cannot wear weeds eternally. Why should they do so? Once the first anguish of bereavement has been assuaged, they have to remember that crying spoils the eyes, and frowning wrinkles the complexion. Besides, what amount of weeping could call the dead back? If tears had

that reviving power, perhaps more would be shed of them than now—perhaps less. Who knows? Anyhow, it is certain that many Young Widows resemble Zadig's wife in accustoming themselves pretty quickly to their new-got freedom. They are obliged to do so, for this world of ours moves fast. The people who sympathise with a widow's grief to-day would be surprised at it a few months later, and would call her 'affected' if she wrapped herself up in solemn gloom, and pretended to mourn too long for 'the dear departed.'

Then, again, the majority of Young Widows are left unprovided for. It is seldom that a young husband has the means or the sense to insure his life for a sum sufficient to keep his wife in case of his death; so that if he dies suddenly, the poor creature is left in the most difficult of positions. She has departed from her parents' house and taken up new connections; she cannot resume her girl's life, nor continue her career as a married woman: if she have children her case is worse, and she has to look about with a keen eye for the means to support the little ones and herself. A pretty common case is that of the Young Widow who is left with about 300*l.* a year. The sum is a sufficient or a small one, according as you treat it. It will not provide satin dresses, six-button gloves, or opera-boxes to

anything like a satisfactory extent; but it will furnish the means of supporting a snug little house in a county town, or even in one of the sea-bathing resorts. Here a Young Widow may be inclined to ask herself what place of residence she would do best to choose, admitting the secret ambition of her life to be a second marriage.

In the first place, it must be laid down as a rule that small country towns are not desirable, as the matrimonial competition in them is too keen. Pushing young men flock to the large cities; and in such sleepy places as Dulton—to name a type—the number of marriageable men is sure to be small, while the candidates for their hands will consist as usual of a great number of eager young ladies, from the miss of seventeen to the spinster of forty. Now the arrival of a Young Widow like our friend Mrs. Lightfoot—in that photograph of a dark-eyed belle you see the lady in question—among this tribe of competitors cannot but provoke strife, more especially as she starts for the matrimonial stakes with all kinds of odds in her favour, or at least apparently so. She can go about without a chaperon, invite people to her house, dress stylishly, and can even make advances.

Being witty and liberal in the matter of tea-giving she soon gets a little set round her, and finds some ardent worshippers even among the girls she is cut-



THE CHARGE OF THE FAIR BRIGADE.





THE SURRENDER.

100



ting out. For a girl, the friendship of a young married woman is much like what the friendship of a sixth-form boy at school is to a junior. Girls make of marriage their chief conversation; and to get nuptial mysteries and trials at first hand from one who has been initiated, instead of seeking for them in novels, is most delightful. But while the new arrival has many friends she has still more enemies, and these, with their sharp active tongues, are never long in tearing her reputation to shreds.

That is why so few Young Widows ever pick up husbands in small towns. They may be popular with the men, but the men are afraid of them. Ugly stories have been set going. Mothers, sisters, and cousins join in declaring that Mrs. Lightfoot is a flirt and a jilt, who, as they know for certain, has something shady in her antecedents. Some affirm that she was never married at all. Mrs. Lightfoot may put a good face upon these stories, if the rumour of them reaches her; but plenty of the things said against her will not reach her ears at all, and she will exhaust her patience in trying to understand why Mr. This and Mr. That, who are so amiable to her at times in public places, shrink up into unaccountable reserve when she endeavours to tackle them alone.

A danger then arises lest the widow should go too far in seeking to bring about an explanation with one of the gentlemen above named. If she do this, her hopes will be ruined beyond repair. Mr. This may be a facetious person, fond of flattery and flirting, but he has a whole array of female kinsfolk to reckon with; while Mr. That, though independent and in easy circumstances, may possibly be of jealous mood, and not at all disposed to see the spectre of the late Mr. Lightfoot, or of some other man, stand for ever between him and the widow if she becomes his

wife. In most country towns one meets with widows like Mrs. Lightfoot who were pretty once, and whose hopes flew high, but who, though Time may have grayed their hair, are able to say conscientiously that they never, at any time, got a fair opportunity of being remarried. Admirers they have had in plenty, but of serious suitors none.

The Young Widow who sets up in a fashionable watering-place is likely to be more fortunate. Here, at least, she will get opportunities; and her chief peril will lie in the temptation to refuse the first good offers that come in the expectation of getting better ones by and by. During the bathing season, the pretty widow who comes down every day to the beach or the pier with a striking costume is sure to attract attention. She will be followed to her residence, and inquiries will be discreetly made about her. If she be staying in an hotel, so much the better. Her acquaintance may be cultivated at the *table d'hôte*. It will then be ascertained that she has a child of four, who is staying with its aunt; that she is related to a baronet; and that she delights in picnics. After dinner she will retire to the hotel drawing-room with a very cheerful old lady, who is on terms of familiar endearment with her, as it seems, and who adores picnics too.

Here the acquaintance of the pair may be fol-

lowed up, and plans for an outing devised. The widow will of course not be too coy. She will only stipulate that her dear friend, the old lady, may come with her. This old lady enacts the part of duenna rather than of chaperon. She is careful about the Young Widow's health, chides her for exposing herself to draughts, entreats her to wrap herself up warmly, and urges her to drink two or three glasses of sherry at dinner because the doctor ordered it. But she has a happy knack of going to sleep when she perceives her *protégée* to be flirting; though by cleverly opening one eye now and then she keeps the suitor on the *qui-vive* of peril, and induces him to throw at once more warmth and more purport into his whispered declarations.

The Young Widow who has been cutting a gay figure for a fortnight at the seaside will have the satisfaction of hearing herself talked about in divers keys. But at the seaside this does not matter. The briny breezes infuse a tonic of good-natured indulgence into persons who are elsewhere captious critics; and then, as the colony of visitors is continually being transformed by fresh arrivals and departures, scandal has not time to shape itself into anything like a settled public opinion. Moreover at the seaside a Young Widow will be confronted by rivals of her own status. Perhaps there will be as many as half a dozen young

widows, all staying at the same big hotel, all having children of four, all related to baronets, and all loving picnics. The scandal launched by match-making mammas and neglected ugly virgins cannot taboo the whole of them; and being powerless against them in the concrete may perhaps do no harm to any one of them individually.

But where many widows are flourishing together the expenses of showing off to the best advantage naturally fall heavy. Our friend Mrs. Lightfoot may have set off for Flirton-on-the-Sea, resolving not to spend more than fifty pounds on her month's trip; but soon the necessity of having one dress more than she had reckoned on becomes demonstrated to her. There is a Mrs. Quickfoot, who is 'making the running,' and establishing herself as first favourite, by sporting a costume peculiarly novel and becoming. Mrs. Q. must be cut out, unless Mrs. L.'s trip is to result in ignominious failure.

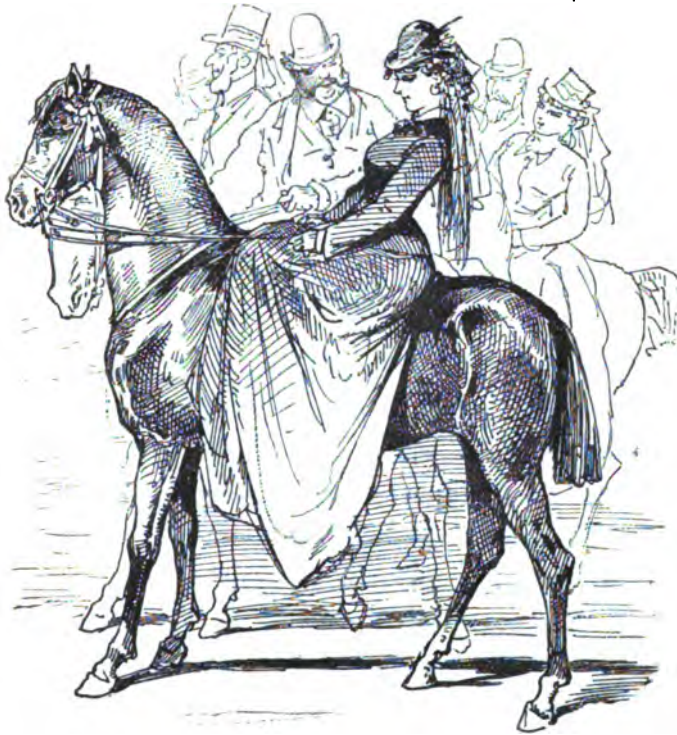
But then comes a Mrs. Smartfoot, who takes horse-exercise daily on the parade, and draws all the men after her. Her riding, her habits, the bunches of carnation which she wears on her bosom, the gold knob of her riding-whip, all become the talk of the place. Mrs. Lightfoot and Mrs. Quickfoot thereupon fall to calculating as to whether *they* can afford a horse apiece, only just for a fortnight. Of course



MRS. SMARTFOOT.

they do not communicate their cogitations to each other, though they may be very good friends; but each in secret orders a riding-habit, hires a hack, and makes arrangements with the florist, the one for a bunch of moss-roses every day, the other for pansies.

One bright morning Mrs. L. takes the parade by surprise, by appearing on a beautiful chestnut,



MRS. LIGHTFOOT.

which makes Mrs. Q., whose equipments are not quite ready, bite her lips with dismay. But two days later Mrs. Q. herself shows up on a lovely white mare, with a long swishy tail. Then there are three well-mounted widows dividing the public homage; and it is odds but that one of the three, if not the two others, is successful in bringing down a husband.



It is a question whether a Young Widow who has but 300*l.* a year had not better, at the outset, convert this income into what capital it will fetch, and lead a merry life so long as the money lasts. The more prudent course of living on the 300*l.* a year has its merits, but also its objections. Men are often caught by spangles. A woman who has money is like a jewel well set. She can surround herself with all the elegancies requisite to show her off to the best advantage. She can afford to look as if she despised money, and by such means is the more likely to catch a moneyed man. The grasping women of novels, who set their caps at millionaires, would not succeed in real life if they showed such ardour in the pursuit. Gold often runs to gold, or to simili-gold, like steel to the magnet.

The Young Widows who do not try small towns or watering-places often make the mistake of going

abroad, hoping to effect a settlement there. They underrate the prejudice which exists in foreign minds against the English, first, on account of religious differences, and next, owing to the fact that few English people who go to settle abroad are exempt from some little blot in their antecedents. It has passed into a saying among foreigners in many places, that if you make the acquaintance of an English family you are sure to hear something against them after a while from other English.

Besides, as regards marriage, foreigners take such positive views, that a Young Widow of sentimental instincts would soon be shocked by the mercenary spirit in which a foreigner proposing for her hand would treat the preliminaries of matrimony. If she had 300*l.* a year he would make the frankest inquiries how this sum was settled on her, and break off without scruple if he found that the settlement was too tightly drawn up.

On the whole a Young Widow had best stick to England, and if she have not the nerve for putting her fate to the touch in a sea-bathing town, she will find her best opportunities for advancement in one of the large cities. In London, if she takes to theatre-going, walks at the Zoo, and rides in Rotten Row, she will doubtless ensnare, before long, the heart of some well-to-do old quidnunc, who, having nothing to



do, spends most of his time on the prowl for pretty faces. There are plenty of such in all big cities ; but the Young Widow who has urgent reasons for wishing to remarry fast had better not be too particular when she makes her choice among them. They are all much of a muchness, so she might safely act on the principle of first come first served.

Lastly, there is a very Gay Young Widow indeed, who is more often to be found on the Continent, particularly in Italy, than in England, though specimens have been seen amongst us. Sometimes she has

money, and no care for her reputation, which she does not think worth preserving; sometimes she is poor, and considers other things more pleasing than reputation. In either case she leads the life of an immoderately gay man-about-town, and is a jolly fellow every inch of her. She has no squeamishness, and has been known to turn up under a strong escort in men's clothes at places where ladies are not admitted.

When she is rich a succession of nice young men appear at her entertainments, and, after holding the mastership of her household in turns, disappear into chaos to give place to a new company. She takes life as it comes, and having a sincere love for all kinds of pleasure denies herself nothing she fancies. On the whole, her friends are more favoured than her lovers, and she seems prouder of them. She is extremely good-natured to everybody, treating men as comrades and boon companions upon perfectly equal terms. She is a charming hostess, and can talk of politics, art, and literature with that fresh personal knowledge of things and people which is always attractive. She bestows her favours on any suitor who is importunate, when occasion serves, or when she is in the humour for flirtation, just as she would perform any other neighbourly act of no consequence. She thinks no more of making an assignation in her boudoir by moonlight than of giving an invitation to dinner.

She has forgotten at least half her lovers ; but she cannot be called false, because she does not pretend to be true. She had, perhaps, a great love in her heart once upon a time, and it was betrayed. Now she professes a code of ethics in love-affairs, where the heart is left out. Her house is a splendid bachelor lounge. Music and feasting and impromptu dances are always going on in different corners of it, and it is furnished with marvellous taste in art. She is generally surrounded, too, by a bevy of pretty women, who are either poor relations who live upon her, or minor satellites who move around her, and form her court. She is charitable, generous, serviceable, and very influential too in her careless capricious way, pulling strings when she pleases that move famous puppets one would not suspect of being under her thumb. She gives away a large share of her income in charity, and, being of a quick enthusiastic temper, will probably enter a convent when life's banquet palls upon her.

The poor Young Widow of the same type is oftenest a pretty wayward woman with an envious undisciplined mind, driven half mad by circumstances with which she had not patience to deal, and therefore deemed hopeless. She first runs away with a hobbler from Oxford, and is then heard of in company with Lord Tantivy and a four-in-hand. Generally

she settles in Paris during the season, and becomes familiar with grand-dukes, petty dukes, counts, and princes without number. Now and then she even condescends to a banker-baron or an American mine-owner. It is dangerous to offend her, for she lives high and shrinks from no sort of scandal. She has been known to horsewhip a clergyman in the Rue de la Paix at five o'clock on a spring afternoon, and in any discussion she will have her way or make creation scream. Sometimes she amasses a fortune, and ends



her life as Lady Bountiful, with a château in Normandy or a villa at Cannes, having been prudent with her gains. Sometimes, when her game is quite over, she drowns herself in the Seine on a wintry night when the east wind is blowing.

IV.

YOUNG WIDOWS OF GOOD ESTATE.

To be the widow of an old man, to be twenty-five years of age, and possessed of a large estate, like the lady whose portrait comes next in our album, is to occupy an enviable position. M. Scribe, the French



playwright, was fond of choosing ladies of this kind for his heroines, and he always rewarded their virtues in the last acts of his comedies by wedding them to tenderly-attached lovers who had been woo-

ing them without any interested motives. M. Scribe, however, as a Frenchman, took business-like views of matrimony, and he never went so far as to depict his heroes as being insensible to the attractions of widows' fortunes. Love may have been the first consideration in their eyes, but interest ran a good second; and, indeed, as most of these heroes were men devoid of worldly means, they could not have afforded to fall in love with women as poorly circumstanced as themselves.

There is a good deal to be said on the subject of mercenariness in courting rich widows. A rich man who falls in love with a penniless girl takes a greater pride in endowing her with his riches than he would in marrying a girl who was rich too; and this is the case also with women. As women are essentially creatures of impulse, governed by the heart more than by the head, they cannot fall in love without instantly burning to make sacrifices for the objects of their affections. The very fact of their being rich, whilst their lovers are poor, is a reversal of the usual order of things, and lends a piquancy to their love-affairs which they find far from displeasing. When a rich widow can take a penniless young man whom she loves, and endow him with all her wealth, her sensations for a while "touch heaven."

Thus it is that we have seen in London, within a period of not many years, a millionaire banker's heiress shower her gold upon an impecunious colonel; the wealthiest of our peeresses wed with an American adventurer; a widowed duchess marry a briefless barrister; and another widowed duchess confer her hand and fortune upon a third-rate tenor who used to sing at concerts. In all of these cases, however, the love was really reciprocal. In the case of the colonel, there was a doubt for some time as to whether this gallant officer would consent to give his name in exchange for a fortune. He thought the bargain had a taint of dishonour upon it; and he had to be coaxed and almost implored before he would agree to a marriage which any continental colonel would have jumped at. It has not transpired whether the briefless barrister and the tenor were equally difficult with their respective duchesses.

Rich women, even more than rich men, have the fancy to be loved for themselves and not for their wealth. And this makes them shrewd in a general way, though not always in particular instances. They are too mistrustful sometimes, and not enough so at others. They mistrust sincerity most, and are least on their guard against flattery.

Once a woman falls in love, it is seldom that anything she may hear against the character of

her lover makes her deviate from her purpose of marrying him. She will close her ears against the remonstrances of her most tried friends. She will defy the whole world, and esteem herself happy at being able to make such a sacrifice for the adored one—who is often but a mere puppy, lovable in no one's eyes but her own.

It says little for women's discrimination in love-affairs, that when holding royal rank they almost invariably choose their favourites ill. Elizabeth of England, Catherine II. of Russia, Queen Christine of Spain, and her daughter Isabella are instances in point. All these ladies had circles of great, brave, and witty men to choose from; but they selected dunderheads to rule over them. So there was not much truth in the saying of that political paradoxist who declared that it was better for a country to have a queen than a king as its nominal head, seeing that when a king held the sceptre, he let himself be guided by women; whereas a queen put herself under the guidance of men. The saw would only have been a wise one if queens were accustomed to choose their lovers well.

The chances are altogether against a rich Young Widow making a happy second marriage. Life is such a grim struggle with most men, that the opportunity of gaining fortune at one stroke by a marriage

tempts adventurers of all ranks to woo the hand of the lovely millionaire. The peer's scapegrace younger son, who gets as deeply into debt as he can on a meagre allowance; the retired major vegetating on half-pay, and eking out his income by turf speculation or games of hazard; the smooth-tongued purring parson hungering after a rich living, are among the first suitors who are sure to offer themselves. The parson is a particularly dangerous suitor, but not with ladies of title. Widowed peeresses seldom feel inclined to sink into the position of rectors' wives, even though they may have the prospect of getting their husbands transformed into canons, and, possibly, into bishops. But the widows of brewers, merchants, bankers, and of men who have been mixed up with trade are generally very susceptible to the influence of the cloth.

A parson seems such a safe person to marry, and the connection is obviously so respectable! No stories of past scandals to be feared; few debts (for the clergy are never trusted overmuch by their purveyors); and then the quasi-certainty of good behaviour in the future. Poor parsons are sometimes raffish, but rich ones never. Wealth develops in them an easy dignity and a great desire for rest. They are precluded from going on to the turf; they cannot fritter thousands away in striving after parlia-

mentary honours; the only passions they can indulge are such as it requires but little money to satisfy.

Occasionally, though, an enriched parson will set



about building a fine church, and this, no doubt, is a costly whim ; but it has its compensations, not the least of which is that it furnishes the parson with the opportunity for paying a graceful compliment to his wife by having her painted in the guise of a saint, and put into a stained-glass window, whereon her benefactions as 'foundress of this fane' will be set forth in Gothic letters on scroll-work.

With a retired officer a Young Widow can get none of the guarantees as to past or future good conduct which parsons afford. The retired major may be as brave as steel, and socially speaking the jolliest of dogs ; but it is pretty certain that at one time or other he will have led a gay life. Besides which, his habit of commanding will have endued him with an imperiousness of mind which will bode ill for domestic peace if the woman whom he courts happens to have a bit of a temper.

The major who has debts is likely to prove a greater tartar than the one who has none. Once his creditors have been appeased, his umbrageous dignity will be continually on the look-out for allusions on the part of his wife to the money which she has expended on him. He will early lay himself out to prove to her that in their marriage the condescension was all on his side, and the favour received on hers. He will brag about his military rank, his campaigns,

and his wounds. He will cause a portrait of himself to be painted with his uniform on, and all his medals on his breast. Perhaps, with a part of his wife's money, he will purchase interest to obtain a Government appointment, and insist that the post in question was bestowed upon him for his sole unaided merit.

Some officers in this case have been known to purchase foreign titles and decorations, which enable them to crow about having brought honour and glory as a makeweight to their wives' dowers. A man who had married a rich wife, and who happened to be a very clever and good fellow, remarked one day before company that it was absurd of him to have said at the marriage service, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow,' seeing that he had no worldly goods to give. 'O yes, my love, you forget your talents!' exclaimed his admiring wife. 'H'm, I didn't endow you with those,' was the retort, more funny than polite.

Beside the peer's scapegrace younger son, the half-pay officer with much time on his hands, and the purring parson, there are other fortune-hunters of a more experienced and wily sort. There is the political adventurer of fair social standing, who wants to marry money, and have his election expenses regularly paid. The game for which he seeks most keenly is a well-endowed widow, for she has commonly her property at her own disposal; and did not a lady of

this description not long ago make a Premier and a peer of her fortunate husband? The gates of office in England only open to a golden key; and never was better advice given to a young Briton than that which warned him 'to get rich before he became ambitious.' Even George Canning's marriage was at least half the secret of his success. Canning the clever anonymous writer, and Canning with 5000*l.* a year and a duke for a brother-in-law, were two very different persons in the eyes of his contemporaries. There has been no instance of a poor man holding any of the great offices of state in our time, save as a mere dummy and nominee of an imperious master, unless indeed he was a peer. No wonder, therefore, that our 'coming men' are so keen-scented and long-winded when pursuing widows of good estate, whether young or old.

Another type of fortune-hunter is the almost bankrupt merchant or manufacturer, who is in want of a round sum in cash to tide him over the critical moment in speculations that have gone wrong; there is also the sanctified plutocrat, always on the lookout for an increase to his wealth and position; and then there is the 'squire of high degree,' whose estate is heavily mortgaged. But the most impudent persecutors of widows will perhaps be found in the speculative fraternity, who want to lease theatres, start

newspapers, keep racing-studs, or operate on the Stock Exchange. The widow of a demi-millionaire proprietor of an important journal, and who had a clear income of 25,000*l.* a year, was literally driven away from home by the annoyance she suffered from these gentry. Each wanted to edit the journal after his own idea, but, above all, to secure the fine fortune, in the possession of a lady who was not a whit too shrewd.

It is rather sad that widows who have lived most wretchedly with their first husbands, and who want to remarry with a view to tasting a little bliss at last, should so often be disappointed. The memory of past sorrows so quickly vanishes when restful days have come, that a widow who has been enjoying her liberty for about a year gets to fancy that she was not so miserable after all. Naturally, however, she will look, in her next love-affair, for qualities quite the opposite of those possessed by her dear departed. Novelty is always pleasing, but never more so than when it promises a change from worse to better.

The Young Widow who has been unhappy with a merchant will be inclined to see of what stuff soldiers are made; while the one who has groaned under the despotism of a military martinet will feel attracted towards the clergy. In these vagaries, however, resides the danger already alluded to of choosing hastily, and consequently with unwisdom. It has passed into a

proverb that widows, to be won, must be wooed quickly, *à la hussarde*, as our French neighbours say. This surely indicates that many widows take less precautions in choosing a second husband than in engaging a servant.

Yet some rich widows remain in single blessedness for years, and appear to enjoy their liberty intensely. When advised to marry, they answer laughingly that they never will; that they have had taste enough of matrimony, and are not anxious to try it again. These widows, who learn to manage their own affairs and become keen women of business, appear to the faint-hearted lover as quite impregnable; and so they are for a time, until the inevitable weariness of things present and the desire for change steal over them of a sudden, and make them dismantle all their fortifications, as it were. Then they capitulate, to everybody's astonishment, at the first spirited assault.

The rich widow who never remarries is not a rare type at all; but the *young* and rich one is. Of young and rich widows it may be said that they have equal temptations to remarry, whether they have been happy or the reverse in their first ventures. If happy, they want to taste felicity over again; if they have been unlucky, they are pardonably curious to try one more chance in the matrimonial speculation, which is indeed a lottery.





A YOUNG WIDOW WHO TAKES BOARDERS.

II. 299.

V.

YOUNG WIDOWS WHO TAKE BOARDERS.

We were much astonished, a little while ago, to meet at Cheltenham with a lady whom we had known in first-rate social position, and who had recommenced life anew as a lodging-house keeper; and shortly afterwards—so do travellers often flush surprises in coveys—we fell in with one similarly circumstanced, who had opened a boarding-house in Paris for tourists. Here are portraits of the pair of them. One has a fair child-like face; the other is dark and voluptuous in appearance.

The lady who had remained faithful to her native soil was, though young and winsome, the mother of four children; and this accounts for her difficulty in finding a second mate. Her husband had enjoyed a handsome income, but, coming from a salary, it terminated with his death; and as he had neither laid a sixpence aside nor insured his life his widow remained without so much as would suffice to pay her tradesmen's bills. This is no uncommon occurrence among those who live sumptuously because their position seems to demand ostentation, and who postpone eco-

nomy to more prosperous times ; just as if they had the gift of prescience and could depend on to-morrow.

Mrs. Crowe at first essayed to live by giving lessons ; but the acquirements she had retained from her education at a fashionable young ladies' school proved insufficient in these days of high-standard certificated governesses. Next she tried to win bread by authorship ; but editors would not insert her prose nor publishers accept her novels. When she had reached the verge of destitution, one of her husband's relatives took pity upon her, bought her the long lease of a house in the western watering-place ; then, having added a sufficient sum to buy furniture, linen, and electro-plate, wished her God-speed.

Mrs. Crowe's unimpeachable respectability and lady-like manners soon procured her lodgers of the best sort. She received two old spinster sisters of property, a hectic clergyman, and a general who had caught a touch of liver complaint in the Barbadoes. Connoisseurs of feminine nature need hardly be told that she lost little time in setting her widow's-cap demurely at this general.

The sly old dog quickly seemed to guess at the impression he had made, and our private opinion is that he harboured designs which had nothing to do with matrimony. However that may be, he was liberal in giving sixpences to the widow's boys and in

buying sugarplums for the girls; moreover, he was a frequent guest at Mrs. Crowe's tea-table, where, let us hope, it was truly the humour of his oft-told anecdotes, and no other secret consideration, which induced her to laugh in a manner so gratifying to his self-esteem.

Truth to say, it is often a grim business, this husband-hunting by widows who have children. General Kite was a yellow-faced wicked-eyed old hunk, never very abstemious over the bottle, and crusty as a bear when his liver - twinges tormented him; but he had two thousand pounds a year from the Funds, besides his half-pay, and poor Mrs. Crowe was terribly anxious that her two boys should be sent to a good school.



That so pretty and sensible a woman as she was should ever have thought of marrying General Kite, if she had had no children to care for, is most unlikely; she would really and truly rather have earned a shilling a day by needlework than think of such a thing. But for her boys' and girls' sake she would have accepted a veteran

with two wooden legs and a cork arm, provided that in the fleshly hand that remained to him this living wreck could show a cheque-book. There may be a repulsive aspect in these motherly sacrifices; but is not the feeling which dictates them genuinely pathetic?

We are sorry to be obliged to add that Mrs. Crowe did not succeed in entrapping her general. When that warrior had been repulsed in his illicit campaign—that which had not matrimony for its object—he took to growling loud complaints about his mulligatawny. Next he missed a bottle of his chutnee sauce, and accused the housemaid. He stamped about the house, and swore such things regarding the attendance, the cooking, unaired sheets, and iron-moulded linen—topics he had never mentioned before—that he fairly frightened the two elderly sisters; and, not content with this, he strode off to the Cheltenham Club, and blustered his belief that Widow Crowe was ‘a minx, sir,’ who robbed and worried mankind, and was always trying to swindle money out of her lodgers for those beggarly brats of hers.

His unchivalrous proceedings went so far that Mrs. Crowe was obliged, at last, with tears in her eyes, but dignity on her face, to request that he would look for other lodgings, which he did forthwith; and perhaps he would have damaged the poor widow in



her good fame and means of livelihood, had not the hectic clergyman mildly, but very bravely, taken her part. He was an excellent fellow, this clergyman, and, perhaps, would have married the widow herself, if his days had not been numbered by consumption.

Did Mrs. Crowe find another well-to-do suitor to replace the gallant General Kite, or did she derive prudence from her first sharp lesson, and resign herself to an eternity of widow's weeds? Well, she is young still, and possibly has not yet played all her trumps. So long as her boys are not out of knickerbockers nor

her girls in their teens there are still chances ahead. We knew of a widow of forty-three who threw down her ace of hearts, and actually took a king with it.

Our next widow, the lady who emigrated to Paris, did better for herself than Mrs. Crowe; for she had a quick scheming nature, and developed in adversity a talent for business which one would never have suspected in the days when she was the admired hostess of one of the nicest drawing-rooms in Kensington Palace Gardens. As marriage has been called the career of women, so is widowhood a kind of pro-



fession; and there are many who know how to make it lucrative.

Mrs. Lovelace had fallen from yet more exalted rank and wealth than Mrs. Crowe; but, to do her justice, she never endeavoured to earn so much as a penny roll by teaching or driving a quill. She went in for a situation as lady-housekeeper and reader to a dilapidated peer, who wanted some one to manage his servants and entertain him with French novels of an evening; and she discharged these honourable duties to perfection, even contriving to incite his lordship against all his relatives, so that they might be ordered out of the house, leaving him and her to enjoy each other's society quite comfortably. After a while the old peer died, and left his friend a round legacy. There was some talk of a suit at law for undue influence, but nothing came of it; and Mrs. Lovelace, money in hand, started for Paris, where she embarked her capital in a private hotel, which was frequented chiefly by Americans.

It was the oddest boarding-house in the world. The mistress of it, not content with housing and feeding her lodgers, showed them the sights of the French capital from a barouche, with liveried coachman and footman on the box. She also took them to boxes at the Opera, for which they paid. There were champagne and truffles on the table at every meal,



READER TO A DILAPIDATED PEER.

and all the gentlemen present treated her on a footing of affectionate familiarity, as if they were her cousins. Yet there was never any card-playing in the house—at least not for high stakes—and no perceptible impropriety.





CONFIDENCES OVER A CUP OF CARAVAN TEA.

II. 237.

Mrs. Lovelace stated in her prospectus that it was her main object to provide wealthy strangers with all the advantages of a luxurious and pleasant home during their sojourn in Paris ; and she kept a well-dressed polyglot tout, who used to carry these prospectuses, enclosed in pink envelopes, prettily sealed, to rich Americans on the day after their arrival at the Grand Hôtel and the Hôtel du Louvre. It is supposed that she took many a valuable customer from these two houses by this method ; one fact at least is certain, that strangers who entered her hotel were in no hurry to leave it, though the cost of living therein was not such as would commend it to tourists of the Cook's-excursionist class. When we met Mrs. Lovelace in the Bois de Boulogne she told us, with a business-like smile, which became her wondrously, that she was earning about 4000*l.* a year.

But this engaging lady had yet another string to her bow ; and one evening, over a cup of caravan tea in her Japanese boudoir, she confessed to us that she had instructed the famous matrimonial agent, M. Foy, to find her a second suitable husband. Now this M. Foy is not an agent after the manner which the uneducated vulgar may suppose. He carries on his business like a man who feels the responsibilities of his mission : he is discreet, full of tact, and charges high. There are hundreds, nay thousands, of couples

enjoying connubial bliss at this hour, both in France and elsewhere, who were brought together by M. Foy's good offices, without their having the slightest suspicion of the fact.

Their affairs were managed for them by match-making mammas and family solicitors, who know that M. Foy is just the man to appeal to when a young lady or gentleman, for some reason or another, is difficult to dispose of. M. Foy is never so ill-advised as to let his interference appear ostensibly in a negotiation. He presents a father or mother to somebody who, maybe, knows somebody else, who is acquainted with a well-to-do aunt having a niece to marry; and the aunt, no more than the niece, will have any idea to her dying day that the arch-hymeneal plotter had thrown out his feelers in her direction. All this is managed by the instrumentality of numerous non-professional sub-agents, who are paid 'by the piece,' and have often but an ephemeral connection with M. Foy. Any man can become a sub-agent of this sort by simply going to M. Foy with the announcement that he knows of a marriageable person, and volunteering an introduction. He and M. Foy divide the profits of the commission-money, and nobody is any the wiser.

It speaks well for M. Foy's integrity—as he takes care to remark modestly, but feelingly, in his pros-

pectuses—that among the persons who have favoured him with their assistance may be reckoned ladies and gentlemen from the highest social rank and the most eminent degrees of celebrity in art, letters, science, and the liberal professions. This is simple enough; for as every Frenchman looks upon marriage as a business, nobody is ashamed to turn an honest penny by aiding in the marriage of his friends or of passing strangers.

So, then, Mrs. Lovelace had put her hand into the keeping of the discreet M. Foy, who had promised to put her in the way of an active middle-aged French judge, who wanted to have a comfortable home. This dignitary was too much engrossed by his business to go a-wooing, and he was bashful into the bargain; but he had an uncle who was bent on drawing him from his single blessedness, and it was through this gentleman that Mrs. Lovelace was to be introduced to the judge, who was as yet in ignorance of the bliss in store for him.

Mrs. Lovelace avowed that she had cast her lines for a Frenchman, because English people have a prejudice against boarding-house widows (and against old gentlemen's lady-housekeepers, she might have added); but Frenchmen hold by the liberal doctrine that 'money always smells good;' besides which, she would, of course, save appearances by giving up her



establishment some months before the wedding. Mrs. Lovelace's name had never been positively tainted by

scandal. She had laid by a good deal of money; she spoke French to perfection; and solicited our candid opinion as to whether she were not the kind of woman who could make a middle-aged and bashful French judge happy.

We raised our eyes and gazed at a lady splendidly attired in black velvet and lace, with a pearl necklace and several massive bracelets of diamonds and rubies. She had arms of sculptural mould, rich clustering black hair, whose raven glint was set off by a scarlet rose, deep eyes of velvet lustre, and lips that could be very eloquent without speaking. Withal Mrs. Lovelace bore herself with the mien of a woman who is accustomed to see mankind at her feet, and had a general air of being able to do battle for herself, which augured vastly well for the quietude of the French judicial luminary. No doubt he will be a happy man.

There remains to be described the clergyman's widow: and here is a portrait of an unpretending little body which I find on a flyleaf of my album, not very well knowing how it got there. She is a young woman whom her husband's death has not left destitute, but whose income is nevertheless insufficient to maintain her in the position which she occupied whilst her dear departed was alive.

Perhaps she has 200*l.* a year, and a child to

support. She is clever at economising, and can live within her income, but not on the same scale as a French widow, who would dress handsomely on 200*l.* a year and save besides. To an English gentlewoman the above revenue is but a wretched pittance, and the widow's first care is to look



about for a cheap lodging of some pretensions, situate in a town where genteel society is forthcoming. Cheltenham, Leamington, and Malvern are likely to suit her. She avoids boarding-houses at first, as likely to bring her into raffish company, and chooses rather the house of some highly respectable person, a widow, like herself, who will be looked upon by the world as a model duenna. By and by she begins to find the superintendence of this duenna tiresome. The highly respectable widow spies upon her, favours her with 'motherly' advice in an acid tone, and eventually gives her warning, because this advice is resented in a manner not too filial. The Young Widow's second experiment in lodgings is made under a roof the landlady of which looks like a person who will leave her free to act as she pleases; and it must be owned that this precious liberty is, for a long time, not abused.

The clergyman's widow lays herself out to catch a second clergyman. She courts the society of an unmarried vicar, and goes great lengths with him; then when this paragon slips from her, owing to a too great show of anxiety on her part to land him, she sets her lines for curates, and soon has one or two of these pious fish nibbling at the 200*l.* a year which she has to offer. If she would like to accept a bald divine of fifty, who has a greasy coat-collar and gives

lessons at a shilling the hour, or a half-famished deacon, who has never been able to pass his examination for priest's orders, or a whisky-smelling priest, who held a living once, but had to resign it for reasons not satisfactorily explained, she would only have to pick and choose.

She has also very good chances with a sharp-nosed Master of Arts, who writes for the press, and would like to start a new clerical journal of his own. He frequently calls upon her and hints that 4000*l.* (the capital of 200*l.* a year) launched in a journalistic enterprise would bring in 500*l.* a year at least, and perhaps four times that, for there is no limit to the revenue of a successful paper. Another curate comes nearer to the mark in remarking that 3000*l.* only might purchase an immediate presentation to a living worth 600*l.* a year. But the widow prefers not to part with any of her money, the importance of which gets enhanced in her eyes by the cunning attempts made to secure portions of it.

If she fell really in love she would of course not object to buy a living for the man of her choice, since cures of souls can still be bought like profane merchandise; but it so happens that none of the holy men who angle for the widow's money throw out any bait to her heart. Her dream was to find an amiable young rector, or an equally amiable young curate, who

should woo her, firstly, owing to her charms, and secondly, owing to that great experience in parish work, of which she is never weary of boasting. She privately thinks that she ought really to be considered a great prize by any clergyman about to commence his career. If she dared, she would advertise in the papers :

‘ A young and musical Widow, having a considerable knowledge of Church matters, and who would be found an invaluable help to any clergyman newly beneficed, wishes,’ &c.

The clergyman’s widow ends by renouncing her ecclesiastical hopes. It is so rare as to be a phenomenal occurrence when one of this sort remarries into the Church. Generally she lapses into the ‘ boarding-house widow,’ or when the education of her child begins to make a serious hole in her modest income, she will perhaps take boarders herself. In either case she is prone to set her cap at middle-aged annuitants with a tendency to gout. Having discovered that her child is an awkward bar to her marrying a young man, she has trained it to pretty manners, in the hope, based on motherly pride, that childless elderly gentlemen will think as well of it as she does. If the child be a girl the chances are in her favour; for old gentlemen like to be petted by young girls, and have sometimes no objection to step into the possession of a family ready made.



After all there are no great risks to run with girls. They help their mothers to make the house comfortable, they do not usually get into scrapes or debts, and, with a very moderate amount of fondling on the part of their fathers-in-law, they become attached and agreeable. But a boy is a different crea-

ture ; and it requires a very dull old gentleman indeed not to see that the fair-spoken curly-headed urchin of to-day may become the rip, rake, or spend-thrift of ten years hence. If an old gentleman has a little property of his own, he is extra cautious not to embark it in a matrimonial speculation which may involve him in the payment of 'ticks' for youthful dissipations which he cannot share.

Many a widow owes her inability to find a second settlement to the possession of a son ; and the more she dotes upon that son the less likely she is to find favour in the sight of ripe old suitors, whose affection is selfish, with a tendency to be jealous even of cats or dogs who divert the least part of the exclusive attention which they claim as their due. Some widows have tried the plan of sending a small son to school, and saying nothing about him till the elderly wooer has got so far into the toils as to be unable to withdraw. This is not a bad device if skilfully conducted, and it has often led a widow to secure both a wealthy second husband for herself and an accommodating second father for her boy.

VI.

WIDOWS WHO WANT SITUATIONS.

Among some papers which came into my hands as executor to a Mr. Lackaday I found the portrait of a resolute-looking lady, and the following extract from a daily paper:

‘LADY HOUSEKEEPER, or Companion to a Single Gentleman or Widower.—A young Widow Lady, of refined tastes and manners, and cheerful disposition, is open to an engagement. Salary not so much an object as a comfortable home. The advertiser is thoroughly domesticated, and competent to take the entire management of a gentleman’s household. Speaks French, and is musical. —Address, Vidua,’ &c.

Advertisements like the above are pretty frequently to be met with in English papers, and they are apt to fall under the eyes of larky young men who answer them. To prevent this kind of thing, the Viduas who advertise in American papers generally add, ‘No triflers need apply;’ but it is rather difficult to ascertain that a man is a trifier until he has declared himself. Coelebs, who writes to Vidua from his London club, and makes an appointment near the ‘Wild Ass Pound’ at the Zoological Gardens,

may go a long way in trifling before the lady discovers what he is about. For very shame's sake, if Vidua should turn out to be a nicely-dressed well-looking woman of good manners, he will talk as if he meant business. He will allude to his house in the country, where the servants are all running riot for want of a mistress's control; he will ask Vidua's terms, and suggest that he is ready with references, as a hint to Vidua that she should say the same. If Vidua have her references too, Cœlebs is of course floored, and hastens to beat a retreat under cover of promising to write.

It often happens that a trifler, who has beguiled an advertising widow into a rendezvous, goes away with a flea in his ear, owing to the lady's extreme dignity. Widows are more than a match for young men. Should, however, Vidua be so foolish as to let herself be quite caught by Cœlebs' patter, inducing her to venture out of her reserve, and to make advances to him, a rude jest and laugh may not unlikely warn her all of a sudden that she has been duped.

There are others besides young men who answer advertisements like the foregoing, without serious, or at least proper, intent. These advertisements have a suggestiveness about them which titillates the nerves of sensuous but shy old gentlemen. The

portly middle-aged widower again, a full-blooded man, with large red ears, is often caught by them. He is rather too old to remarry, yet he cannot get on without feminine society. His respectability prevents him from flirting; his morals—for perhaps he belongs to a straitlaced sect of Jumpers—withhold him from placing some pretty milliner under his protection. At the same time his sense of order, and his fondness for domestic comfort, make him indisposed to court the favours of his pretty housemaid.

He is almost sure to have a pretty housemaid, for men of this stamp abhor ugly women; but though her charms may have some effect upon him, causing him to ogle her curiously on the sly, he will not dare transgress the limits of decorum in his relations with her. Even when our friend answers the advertisement of Vidua, he will do so without any clear intention of embroiling himself in a dangerous connection. He will answer, because his instincts impel him towards women, and because his fancy will paint Vidua as a fascinating lady in her prime, who will not be too coy if wooed, and who in any case may be agreeable to him of an evening by playing the piano while he warbles snatches of operatic airs.

Our friend—let us call him Viduus—will doubtless open his fire upon Vidua in a heavy sort of way,



by a letter in dignified language: 'Mr. V. presents his compliments to Mrs. V.,' &c., and he will ask for particulars. Vidua will reply with eight pages of close writing, furnishing much interesting rigmarole about her history and misfortunes, and will enclose a photograph. Being rather past thirty, she will send



a highly-finished vignette, executed when she was twenty-four, and this will fetch Viduus to a certainty. An appointment will be made at the refreshment-room of the Ludgate-hill Station. Widowers like meetings at railway-stations, for they are the safest of trysting-places ; and besides a refreshment-room offers opportunities for a little of that conviviality which breaks the ice of formalism.

But we may trust Viduus for being first at the rendezvous, and for locating himself in such a way that he shall have a good long gaze at Vidua before she notices him, or suspects who he is. He has been

careful in his letter to say nothing about his own personal appearance. He is to recognise Vidua by a cherry ribbon which she will wear in her bonnet. If, now, she proves an ugly person, faded, and evidently bent on concealing the number of her years under a layer of pearl-powder and rouge, Viduus will slink off, and write on the next day to say that unavoidable circumstances compelled him to alter his arrangements, so that he was unable to keep his appointment, and will not trouble Vidua any further, as he purposes leaving town.

But if Vidua's natural charms, or her pearl-powder and rouge, have made her sufficiently captivating to work upon the feelings of Viduus, the latter will accost her more or less shyly, and, after a few commonplace remarks, suggest a luncheon in the dining-room hard by. One need not follow the couple further than this. Whether Viduus takes Vidua for his lady-housekeeper and companion, clings to her and eventually marries her, or whether he simply dallies with her for a few days, and then parts from her on discovering that he and she have an incompatibility of temper, are matters of but little interest as affecting Young Widows in general. Events necessarily differ according to particular cases, and widows who insert advertisements in the papers like the one we have quoted no doubt occasion-

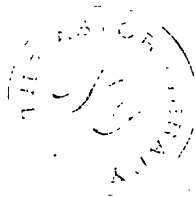
ally succeed in landing substantial widowers in their nets.

Here is another form of advertisement, which occurs now and then, and deserves to be thoughtfully considered :

‘A WIDOWER, having three daughters, aged from ten to sixteen, wishes to secure the services of a lady who is capable alike of managing a household, and of imparting instruction to three motherless girls.—Address, Viduus,’ &c.

This is Viduus, Number 2. He may be the same Viduus as the one already mentioned, who, having failed to arrange terms with Vidua, sees fit to recommence operations by inserting an advertisement on his own account. Anyhow, the man who launches such a general appeal to ladies out of work is either a very shy man or a disreputable one. He may be both. A widower in good circumstances, and enjoying a satisfactory character, may almost always find within his own circle of acquaintance some lady competent to discharge the duties above particularised. It is fair to add, however, that in the case of widowers who reside in the country this rule does not always hold good ; for it may well happen that in a country district there shall be no eligible Viduas within beck of a Viduus.

The widower who lives in the country is often a man profoundly bored. Local politics, interests, and





A YOUNG WIDOW IN WANT OF A SITUATION.

"You had better let my girls think you and I are old friends,"

doings weary him. He has had a sickening surfeit of them. In his declining years he wants to be amused by a gay sprightly woman, who shall be able to talk with him about the great world of London, in which he has not moved for years, if ever he did move in it.

Such widowers are not particular. Vidua receives a letter with a country post-mark, sends her photograph, as per custom, and receives in return a post-office order sufficient to pay her expenses to Boreham Grange in Noshire. Down she goes, and finds a plump, but prematurely aged, individual, who has put on his best clothes and greatest dignity of manner to receive her. Vidua sees at a glance that she can hook this personage with a turn of her wrist. He is not likely to pay for a second post-office order to secure an interview with another widow. He wants to find a companion as easily as possible, and without any delay. He says timidly, when the interview has lasted about a quarter of an hour: 'You had better let my girls think that you and I are old friends. They do not know that I advertised.'

Vidua, if she remains with a Viduus of this sort, gets married pretty soon. The tattling tongues of country neighbours would not allow a widower to keep a lady-housekeeper long without carping on the

subject. Generally, Viduus will find it convenient to pass off Vidua from the first as his cousin or sister-in-law, in order to give her the proper amount of authority over his girls; and then a marriage between him and her will take no one by surprise.

There is a sort of widow, too, who advertises occasionally, and chooses by preference the *Morning Post* as a medium of communication with the outside world. She is willing to undertake the duties of chaperon to girls who want introduction to good society, and under plausible language practically offers to sell presentations at Court and elsewhere for a substantial consideration. She is very precise on that point; and her advertisements always conclude with the assurance that she 'expects liberal terms.' This kind of advertiser is frequently the widow of an Irish peer's younger son, who has a preposterous idea of her own rank in life; or the relict of an Anglo-Indian officer, who is anxious to turn her old sweethearts and acquaintance to account. Sometimes she can really perform her promise; but more often her proposal is merely that of a light-headed unprincipled woman at her wits' end to pay her debts, and ready to try the first scheme that presents itself to her flighty imagination.

Now let us turn to another class of advertisement:

‘LADY-HELP.—A Widow, refined, musical, and a lady by birth, is willing, owing to reverses, to accept a situation as above.—Address,’ &c.

Such announcements as this are mere fudge. Lady-helps have long ago been proved to be failures. They are neither ladies, nor helps, nor servants, nor companions. They are nothing.

The lady-help who gets accepted in a household on the strength of the qualities which she has attributed to herself in her own advertisement is mostly an incumbrance to the household which has consented to receive her services. She wears dainty caps, and walks into the kitchen with a cambric apron on, as if she were a high-priestess about to officiate. In rolling up her sleeves to knead the dough of a pudding, she is careful to remove a jewelled ring or two, in order to show that she has never been used to such work. The pudding which she makes is heavy and indigestible; but it has been compounded by a lady, and that may be some comfort to those who suffer from partaking of it.

Equally comfortable may it be to sleep in ill-made beds arranged by the lady-help, to sit in dusty apartments where the cobwebs have escaped her notice, and to drink lukewarm tea because this precious assistant does not know how to make water boil. The people who would employ a lady-help

rather than an ordinary servant may be classed in two categories: they are either stingy folks who want to get out of a lady for poor pay, or no pay at all, the amount of work which could not be extracted from a servant; or they are persons of that semi-genteel kind who want a lady in their household in order to get from her some inkling as to the usages of polite society. In the former case the lady-help is to be pitied; in the latter she gets a very enviable berth, and speedily becomes mistress of the house where she is supposed to serve.

Lady-helps, however, are becoming rather scarce, and situations in this capacity are sought after rather by gushing and inexperienced girls than by ripe widows. *Vidua* flies at higher game. Self-depreciation is not one of her foibles, and she will never flaunt her poverty to a greater extent than may be necessary to secure her the respectful sympathy of the elderly widowers and bachelors to whom she applies for situations. Pity she does not want—she knows it is degrading to the recipient; but sympathetic admiration is another thing, for it may lead to marriage.

VII.

GREAT MEN'S YOUNG WIDOWS.

Two portraits in our collection represent women who were not young within living memory. They are photographs from famous pictures of Marie Louise of Austria, widow of Napoleon I., and of Caroline of Naples, who married the Duke de Berry, and was mother of the last of the French Bourbons, the yet living Count de Chambord. Both ladies are types of a class which must continue to excite interest so long as illustrious men will die, leaving young wives behind them.

Marie Louise had never been much attached to the magnificent adventurer, who blazed over startled Europe, 'the comet of a season;' but when the great Emperor became the prisoner of St. Helena one might have thought that the young wife's bosom would have swelled with pride at wearing a title which every large-hearted woman in the world must have envied her. Love is not born at will; but any woman of common good feeling would try to bear with dignity the name of a hero. The daughter of the Hapsburgs and the descendant of Maria Theresa



might have remembered that when she issued from Notre Dame in her bridal dress, she had been acclaimed by conquering legions who had made the proudest monarchs of Europe to tremble on their thrones; and if her heart was not with the victor of Austerlitz, she might have recollected, at least, that she was the mother of the King of Rome.

But Marie Louise had no care for dignities, and while the great Emperor was still alive she had already begun to dally with one Neipperg, a baron. He was a poor creature, with whiskers and a bald head; but she loved him in her fat German way, and the pair begot children. So soon as death had put Napoleon out of the way they married, and Marie Louise, to please Neipperg, surrendered even her title of Empress, and called herself Duchess of Parma. French tourists who wandered through the Parmesan Duchy in those days would come across a heavy landau, containing the whiskered Austrian, his plump spouse, and a row of brats nestling on the front seat; and it served them little to flush red at the thought that they had just seen the woman who, during Napoleon's last Russian and German campaigns, had been Empress and Regent of France.

Marie Louise had so thoroughly accustomed herself to her new state of life that the merest allusion to Frenchmen made her fidget and yawn. She considered Neipperg a much finer fellow than her first husband, and had an Austrian regiment at her orders, which the mighty warrior reviewed every morning. Neipperg had a weakness for diamond rings and Hungarian wines. Marie Louise loved pastry and piquet; and among the favourite amusements of the Court of Parma were blindman's-buff and *morra*, a

game wherein a player tries to guess what another player holds in his hand, and gets smacked for divining wrong.

Amid such intellectual pursuits the ex-Empress became so oblivious of her first-born son, that when the young Duke of Reichstadt lay dying at Vienna, and it was suggested to her that it would be a motherly proceeding to go and see him, she was moved to peevish tears and wrath. Neipperg forbore to press the point. He had every reason to be satisfied with his wife's fidelity towards himself; and soon after this little episode, which proved that Marie Louise had a will of her own when she chose to exert it, the magnanimous Duchess ordered the summary expulsion from her dominions of a French artist, who had travelled to Parma for the sake of dedicating to her a picture, which represented the christening of the heir whom she had borne to Napoleon.

The pen of a moralist will dwell humorously, rather than critically, on the soulless personality of Baron Neipperg's wife; for she was only a woman after the manner of all the women who have more sensuousness than sense, and placidity than ambition. If a Frenchman had been required to write her epitaph he might have scratched on her gravestone words to make her ashes stir; but Neipperg would have

celebrated her in high-sounding Teuton, as 'a not-to-be-paralleled spouse, and a wholly-by-her-children-engrossed-and-never-in-affection-failing mother.'

Caroline of Naples was a character of altogether nobler mould—a heroine as well as a virtuous woman; and her only fault was that she allowed her too susceptible heart to beguile her into a *mésalliance*, legitimate indeed, but not the less unworthy of her. The Duke de Berry, Caroline's first husband, was not a great man, but he was heir to the French crown; and on the night of the 13th February 1820, when he was stabbed at the Opera-house by the assassin Louvel, he exacted of her a solemn pledge that she would devote herself to the careful rearing of their unborn child, of whom she was then pregnant. Kneeling by the couch of the murdered Prince in the crush-room, to which the King had been hastily summoned, and where prelates, peers, field-m Marshals, and cabinet ministers also crowded to see the Count of Artois' son breathe his last, the Duchess obediently vowed that if her unborn child were a son she would make his education the exclusive aim of her life. Content with this promise, the Duke de Berry died in peace; and during the next ten years the Duchess faithfully fulfilled her vow, setting to all widows a pattern of what a bereaved wife should be.

She was not pretty (though she had beautiful

arms and a sylph-like form, as anybody can see in Lawrence's well-known portrait of her), but she was a woman of extraordinary fascination, full of sweet-



ness and tact, and a princess every inch. In 1830, the Revolution of July having suddenly overturned the throne of the Bourbons, Charles X.'s tardy

abdication in favour of the little Duke de Bordeaux (as he was then called) proved of no avail, and the Duchess, with her son, accompanied the deposed King into exile; but two years later the Duchess de Berry, like another Margaret of Anjou, appeared unexpectedly in the Vendée, and raised the standard of insurrection amongst a peasant population long noted for their loyalty to the White Flag.

Everybody knows the details of this short-lived but spirited civil war, in which the rustic armies, opposed to disciplined troops, were over and over again beaten, but never daunted, till at length, the rebellion having been crushed by sheer force of numbers, the Duchess was obliged to fly in the disguise of a farm-girl, and sought refuge in the cottage of a country pedlar named Deutz. This infamous character betrayed her for a sum of money to M. Thiers, then Home Minister; and the Duchess, having been confined in the Castle of Blaye, was kept there for so many months that she was unable to conceal a second pregnancy, and finally was driven to confess that she had contracted a secret marriage with Count Luchesi-Palli, an Italian.

This avowal detracted nothing from the Royal Princess's honour as a woman; but it destroyed for ever her influence as a party leader. With disgust and words of execration the old nobility of France

turned their backs upon her; the aged Charles X., exasperated to frenzy, withdrew from her the custody of her own son; and from that time forth her name was never mentioned in Legitimist circles, save as that of a woman who had brought indelible disgrace upon her house.

All this was a heavy blow to the high-souled Princess; and she had not even the consolation of being able to point to her second husband as a man whose personal merits justified her condescension towards him. He was a good-looking nonentity, a second Neipperg *minus* the whiskers. He dressed well, bowed well, but was a loose fish in morals, and had notoriously not a *scudo* in the world, when his marriage drew him from obscurity, and, of course, made him rich.

However, the gifted Duchess remained exemplarily faithful to this lustreless gentleman, even after she had discovered what poor stuff did duty for brains in his head; and to the end of their union, which was only severed by death, not a word on her part ever gave cause to suspect that she repented of her choice. But that the Duchess bitterly resented exclusion from the political councils of the exiled dynasty was evident from the numerous attempts which she made to recover her lost footing; and she must have felt galled to the soul when she encountered

the implacable resolve of all Royalists to treat her as an entire stranger to their cause.

Even the Count de Chambord was taught to consider that his mother had made an unpardonable mistake; and though his conduct towards her was always dutiful and affectionate, he never accepted political advice of her—which is perhaps the reason why he has failed to ascend the throne of his ancestors; for in 1848 the heroine of the Vendée skirmishes could have given him more spirited counsels than his ordinary mentor, the temporising Duke de Blacas. The Duchess de Berry died eight years ago, still unforgiven by her son's party; and her demise was chronicled in terms so cold that they bordered upon disdain by the newspapers who advocate the Royalist idea.

Now the case of Marie Louise and of Caroline of Naples is that of many other Young Widows whose husbands had not Royal rank, but were great men nevertheless.

What shall be done, for instance, by the relict of an illustrious poet, statesman, inventor, or general, if she be consigned to widowhood at an age when she is still young enough to please? Must she forget that she is a woman, and, seating herself under the shade of a weeping willow, sternly warn off all suitors in the name of the dear departed? Or may she

adopt a middle course, and, bestowing her hand upon some well-favoured person, endeavour nevertheless to perpetuate the recollection of her first union by continually sighing over the illustrious dead, till the soul of the new consort is profoundly abashed and wearied thereby?

Gentlemen who have been made victims of this middle course have been heard to declare that they wished they had looked before they leaped; so it may be concluded the experiment is not always satisfactory to one of the two parties most interested in it. But it has also been contended, in respect of the ladies themselves, that they are occasionally so ill-starred as to light upon second husbands who impatiently decline to join in duets to the glory of their predecessors, and who, after a time, even oblige their wives to content themselves with occasional brief solos sung in a very minor key. Neipperg, refusing to allow the name of Napoleon to be mentioned in his presence, would have been just this sort of creature.

A French writer, lately describing a widow's wedding in that tone of banter which Frenchmen alone are privileged to use in treating of serious matters, expressed the astonishment he had felt on hearing the officiating priest remind the parties of the eternal nature of the marriage-bond, which, though loosed by death on earth, is renewed in

paradise. 'Why,' thought he, 'those are the identical words that were used at Madame Millefleurs' first wedding!' and forthwith that curious writer fell to imagining what sort of a scene would occur in paradise when Madame Millefleurs, having survived both her husbands, was at length summoned away in her turn, and found the two gentlemen waiting to claim her at the entrance to the Elysian Fields. The solution suggested was that Madame Millefleurs should boldly declare her preference for a third gentleman who had never been her husband at all, and forthwith pair off with him. Let us hope the powers of Olympus will give consent to this arrangement.

Some share of a great man's fame is justly reflected on the wife who cheered his labours, if not inspired them; and we own to a regard for the widow who is mindful of this fact, and, having enshrined the hero in her heart, makes it the business and pleasure of her life to keep his renown ever fresh. This is the illustrious widow of the conventional type. She edits the great man's correspondence, inaugurates monuments in his honour, perhaps writes a biography of him herself, and presents relics of him to public museums. Sometimes she slightly overdoes all this, and raises a smile among members of a new generation, who are but imperfectly acquainted with the great man's claims to have so

much incense consumed over his bones. But if others too soon forget, the zeal of the wife, who cannot forget and will not, so long as she lives, allow her idol's name to be forgotten, is but the more touching; and the kindlier part of society revere the great man's devoted widow, with all her failings—yea, even if she rush combatively into print every time she hears the faintest criticism on the great one's title to immortality.

There are various ways of giving expression to sorrow, however. There is even the comical way; and a delightful *feuilletoniste* tells a story in which it appears that the most genuine grief sometimes verges on the ridiculous. He had agreed to accompany the widow of an acquaintance to the establishment of a designer in hair. Curiosity as much as friendship had prompted him to become her escort; and when they arrived at their destination they found the artist's windows filled with a number of little pictures done entirely in hair, the majority of them representing funereal subjects, such as mausoleums shaded by weeping willows, graves adorned with crosses, gravestones covered with wreaths, and family vaults surmounted by iron railings, the whole with moonlight and romantic effects. There was sufficient to make the coldest-hearted weep.

‘Sir,’ said the widow to the capillary artist, open-

ing a tiny box which she carried suspended to her belt, 'here is some of Jules' hair.'

'One of your relations, madam?'

'My husband, sir—my dear departed husband!'

The artist bowed, and took the proffered hair.

'Jules had very little hair, sir, as you can see. Nature had been sparing to him in this respect, and he was obliged to spread his hair about as much as possible to disguise his early baldness.'

'O, there is a sufficient quantity, madam. Besides, the hairs are of a very fine quality, supple and soft.' While speaking he had taken up a magnifying-glass to examine them. 'And what do you propose to do with them?' asked he of the widow.

'Why, I want a little picture; something in the style of those you have here.'

'Exactly. Do you prefer a landscape or an indoor scene?'

'I have not yet quite decided what to have.'

'An indoor scene has its merits. It enables us to represent some articles of furniture dear to the departed. But, on the whole, a landscape is preferable.'

'Ah, you think so?' asked she.

'Yes. A landscape gives more scope to our imagination. One can utilise the hair of the dead man's beard in arranging the sky and the fleeting clouds. One can make, too, some very pretty fields

with the hair in powder. The long hair furnishes poplars of the stateliest kind.'



'Really!' said the widow, who seemed delighted. 'Then you might manage to represent our country house, that Jules liked so much?'

'Easily, madam. I should only require a photograph of it.'

'I happen to have one with me. You see it is very pretty.'

'Very pretty indeed; and I flatter myself I shall not remain far behind the original. There are innumerable resources in hair.'

'It is a *châlet* at Nogent, on the banks of the river.'

'That's fortunate. A river is one of my specialities,' said the artist. 'Allow me to put one more question to you.'

'With pleasure, sir.'

'Did your late husband have any white hairs?'

'Alas, yes!' replied the widow. 'But I took good care to pick them all out.'

'Ah, that was a mistake. Try to find a few, and bring them to me. Some of the very whitest.'

'What for?' inquired she curiously.

'To represent the river.'

'O, that's charming!' said the widow.

'Leave everything to me, madam, and I will turn out something that will please you—something that will be quite an ornament.'

'What a pleasant time we have passed!' remarked the widow to her companion, as she rose to go, with a gratified smile upon her face.

VIII.

WIDOWS UNDER A CLOUD.

Our next photograph is of a lady who used to travel about the Continent with a toy-terrier and an elderly Scotch maid. She had large pensive eyes, and maintained a well-bred reserve, until, by dint of rather assiduous perseverance, you broke the ice, when she would become chatty and pleasant to a degree which amply repaid all the efforts made to float a conversation. She was clever and well informed, strictly proper withal, without prudery, very neat in her appearance, which denoted easy circumstances, and a charming neighbour at the *table-d'hôte* dinners of the foreign hotel where one met her. She was a widow under thirty, and her husband had been hanged.

There is no need to name the country where this misfortune had befallen him. His wife was quite innocent of any share in his offence, and much sympathy had been expressed for her at the time of the trial; but the fact of her husband having fallen a victim to the obstinate convictions of twelve jurymen

had none the less proved an insuperable bar to his widow's effecting a second matrimonial settlement. To be sure, she had changed her name; but whenever a chance acquaintance seemed on the point of developing into a suitor for her hand—and this happened very often—she would take an opportunity of candidly saying: 'I think it right to tell you that I was the wife of Mr. Blank, who was executed for murder.'

This communication never failed to act as an extinguisher. With a tightening sensation at the throat, the lover would stare to see if the lady was not joking; but when the serious look that passed into those large eyes of hers convinced him that her words were sober reality, his mind would quickly hurry on to one of two conclusions which suggested themselves with irresistible logic—either this comely widow had never loved the late Blank, and if so, why had she married him? or she *had* loved Blank, and in this case what a prospect for her second husband!

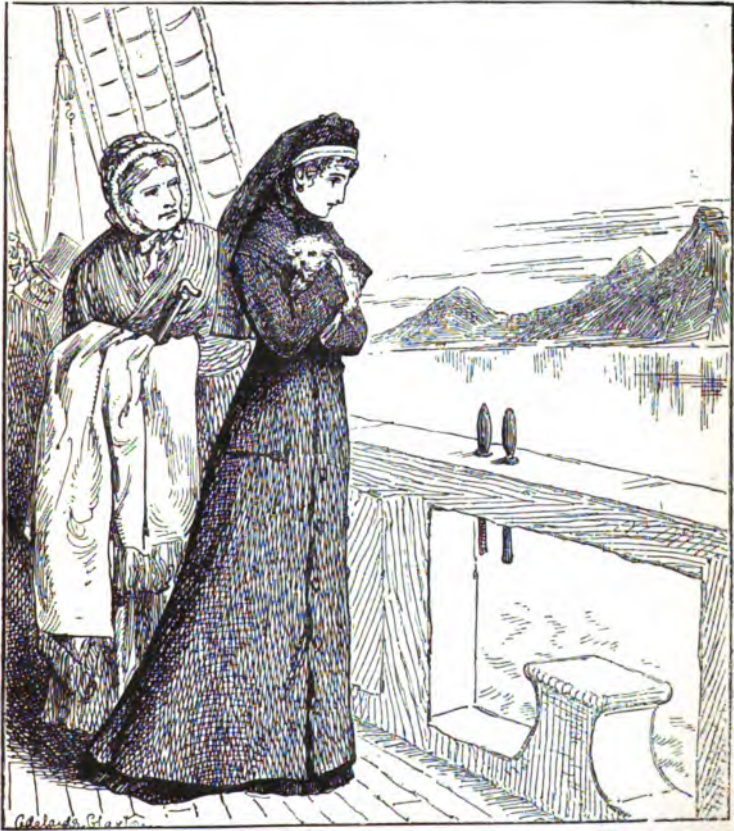
It is bad enough to feel continually between oneself and wife the ghost of a former consort who was an honest man; but when that ghost wears a slip-noose round his neck! And the worst of it is that when women have at any time felt tenderly towards a man who met with a tragical end, that feeling is apt to strengthen wonderfully as time wears on.

There was a French Marquise whose husband was guillotined during the Revolution. While young the lady remained fairly reticent about this catastrophe; but towards middle age she fell into a way of recounting the martyred nobleman's last moments, over the dinner-table. Between the soup and fish she would tell how he wore white-kerseymere breeches in going to his doom; at dessert she imitated the *click* of the knife as it severed his neck; and the hair of every guest would stand on end.

In this case, however, the tragedy related was surrounded by circumstances of truly romantic interest. But how screw any romance out of a man who has been gibbeted? Mrs. Blank, after becoming Mrs. Asterisk, might dismiss all reference to her husband's precipitate decease; but the figure of Blank in the pinioning-room, Blank with the white cap over his face, and Blank disappearing through the drop, were images which must constantly have haunted husband No. 2, and troubled his digestion with uneasy qualms.

Poor Mrs. Blank was roaming about the world in quest of a man who would have the courage to give her a new home and a little love, in spite of the blemish which was none of her own making; and she had not found such a one. Her former friends were not altogether sorry for it, seeing that women in her

helpless position—when they have beauty and money—are very liable to become the prey of adventurers, who first rob and then ill-use them. When last seen,



she was standing on the deck of one of the steamers that ply about the Swiss lakes. She held her small dog in her arms, and her rough-featured but kindly Scottish

attendant stood by her side. In answer to a bow, she smiled a quiet, rather sad, good-bye, and soon the blue ribbons of her bonnet were a speck in the distance. What became of her, whether she married, or emigrated to the New World, or retired to live in the seclusion of some out-of-the-way continental town, we never heard; but the impression left is that she deserved better than the lonely wandering fate which the crime of a man had allotted her.

Turning the page, we come upon another photograph of a widow under a cloud; but this time it was not the gallows-tree that threw its shadow over a life. The reason why people fought shy of the graceful feline Mrs. Fox was that, although she was not more



than twenty-eight years old, she had had three husbands, all of whom had died with mysterious suddenness. The three deaths had brought her three fortunes, and the Young Widow was mightily rich in consequence; but at Brighton, where she mostly resided, people whispered of poison, and nicknamed her 'Lucrezia Borgia.'

Toxicologists hold it as an axiom demonstrated by universal experience that, when a person has once administered poison with impunity, the temptation to do so again and again becomes irresistible. A little knowledge concerning the action of drugs, a little prudence in apportioning the doses, a little judgment in selecting the time, a patiently affectionate behaviour towards the victim, and the risks incurred are almost null. The poisoners who come to trouble are the novices in the art, or those who, grown reckless by repeated successes, neglect the precautions which carried them safely through previous experiments. Of course, if a wife flavours her husband's soup with a whole half-pound of ratsbane, bought at the nearest chemist's, she must expect that the coroner will inquire into the matter. So must the wife who prefaces her drugging with a series of violent domestic scenes, wherein she calls her neighbours to witness that she is married to a brute, and wishes herself well rid of him.

But there are no coroner's juries abroad; whereas numerous popular resorts for invalids exist, where a man's rapid death would excite no manner of surprise. How suspect the loving and tearful young wife, who brings her already ailing husband to drink the waters of Phosphore-les-Bains, and seems so miserably afflicted by his condition? The pair have brought servants with them, and put up at the best hotel, where they pay generously. One of the local doctors is called in, and fee'd on a scale quite magnificent according to his French notions. He prescribes the waters of the place; the patient takes them, and one day dies. But what of that? Phosphore-les-Bains is accustomed to see its broken-down visitors die off like flies; and when the doctor has received a valedictory 1000-franc note in acknowledgment of his precious services, he would be an unmannerly churl if he demanded a *post mortem*, or refused to sign a certificate stating that the patient had succumbed to natural causes. Indeed, if this doctor committed the mistake of hinting at foul play without proof positive, it might cost him his practice. Certainly the hotel-keepers who recommended him would never forgive his having drawn a scandal upon their house; and even the local authorities would frown upon him for trying to scare away visitors from their town.

As the French custom is to bury within forty-

eight hours after death, the deceased stranger is soon laid in the local graveyard, and there is an end of him. His sorrowing widow lingers a fortnight in the place, to pay for a handsome tombstone; she discharges her hotel-bill, thanks the attendants of the deceased for their sympathy, and then vanishes, leaving no address, but only the reputation of an excellent open-handed person.

This is what the gossipers of the Brighton Club used to say to one another as they watched the pretty, but suspicious, Mrs. Fox driving up and down the King's-road in her smart pony-chaise, drawn by a pair of frisky grays. She held the reins herself; a boy-groom sat behind, and by her side figured a toothless servile old dame, who was her inseparable companion. Together the pair used to show themselves on the West Pier, at the Aquarium, at the Pavilion on Saturdays, when the garrison band played; they had sittings at the Ritualist church, and lived in a showy house on the Marine Parade, where no ladies were ever seen to call.

This isolation was, however, due rather to the circumstance that Mrs. Fox took no steps to cultivate acquaintances among her own sex; for, had she done so, not a doubt but her drawing-room would have been as well frequented as that of any other wealthy Young Widow. Ladies would hardly have been de-

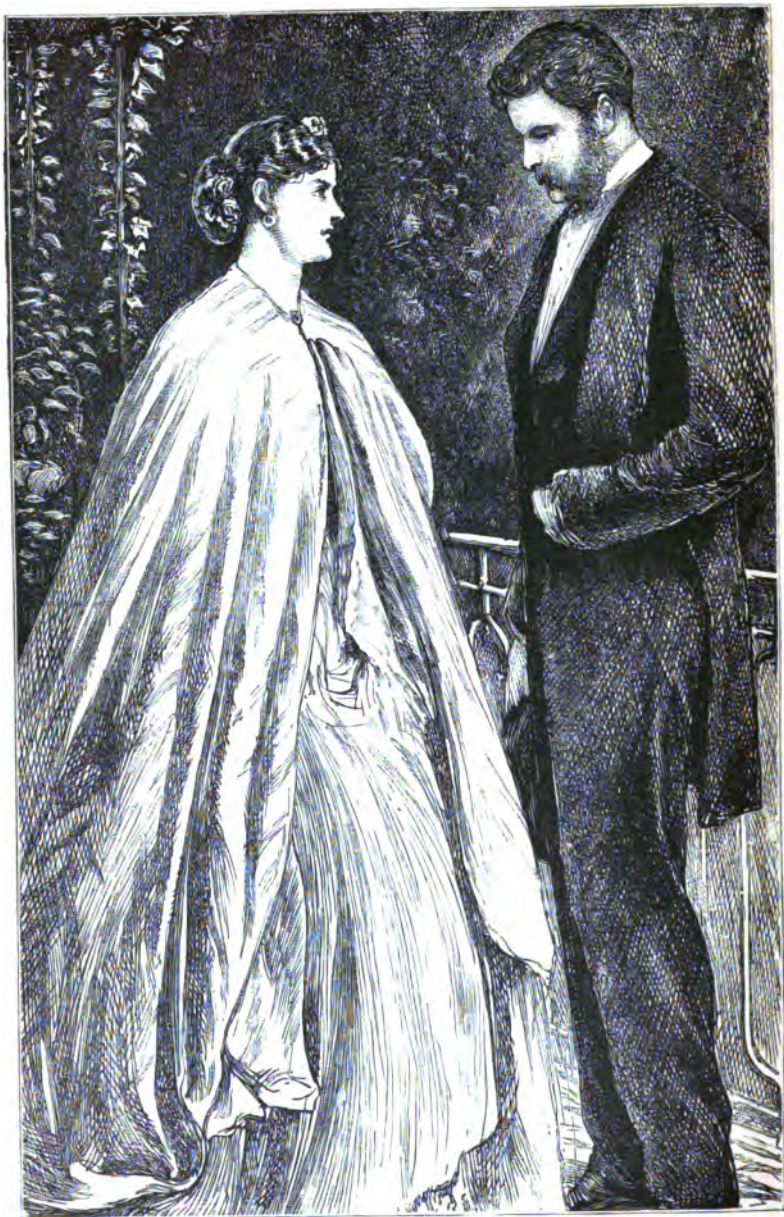
tered from calling on Mrs. Fox by a rumour which rested upon not so much as a tittle of authenticated fact.

Probably her nickname owed its origin to the joke of some disappointed suitor; but, like many other jokes circulated in fun or vindictive malice, it 'took' famously, and during a whole Brighton season was so pitilessly thrust at all suspected anglers after the Young Widow's fortune, that Mrs. Fox remained, to all matrimonial intents, as completely shunned as if she had been a leper.

Mrs. Fox had never belonged to the innermost circle of good society; but she was of excellent middle-class rank, well educated, and a capital







CAPTAIN DOUGHTY AND MRS. FOX.

II. 283.

pianist. Her complexion was pale, her hair dark; her eyes were keen, and could shoot killing glances. There was, in her compact lithe figure, a likeness which suggested the activity of a cat; while the mobile expression of her eyebrows, and her quick nervous way of laughing, were evidences of a temper which would be sure to make her obtain the mastery in any household where the titular head was not a man of exceptionally iron make. Mrs. Fox occasionally alluded, and in feeling terms, to her last husband, but never to the first two; on the whole, she was a person of remarkable attractiveness, and never failed to impress male listeners with the idea that she would make a first-rate wife, and be an ornament to an affectionate husband's home.

A good-looking and much-indebted officer of the hussar regiment in garrison determined to brave the prejudice that was assailing this widow with such a cowardly stupidity, as he called it, and proceeded to pay his court to the lady; but he instantly became the butt of ferocious pleasantries. Some of his brother-officers who could draw papered the mess-room with sketches descriptive of Captain Doughty passing through the progressive agonies of slow-poison. There was 'Captain Doughty finding a queer taste in the sherry;' 'Captain Doughty writhing on the hearthrug, with a hand on the pit of

his waistcoat and his eyeballs starting from their sockets;' 'Captain Doughty having a conjugal tiff with Mrs. Doughty, and being cautioned by her in the well-known words hurled by Lucrezia Borgia at the Duke of Ferrara: "Guarda a voi, il mio *quarto* marito!"' (Mind what you are about, my *fourth* husband!)

If Captain Doughty had lived in a duelling country he might have stopped this persecution by challenges; but a British officer has no remedy against chaff but grinning and bearing it, or else removing the causes which gave it rise. This is what Captain Doughty did. He ceased to court the seductive widow, and bore with what face he could the crowning piece of facetiousness of his friends, which consisted in wringing his hands with silent force, and exclaiming, 'Thank Heaven, old fellow!' just as if he had been rescued from inevitable and violent death.

Mrs. Fox's next wooer was a young solicitor, who would have been very glad of her money to set up in business with; but one day he received, by post, a copy of Alexandre Dumas' *Marquise de Brinwilliers*, with a photograph of his *inamorata* pasted on the fly-leaf; and when, having made inquiries, he learned what rumours had dictated this delightful warning, he fled in horror, never to return. A merchant and a naval captain were successively scared off by simi-

lar pranks ; and all this while Mrs. Fox, being ignorant of the things bruited against her, could not, for the life of her, understand what made all her lovers act with such inconceivable flippancy and lack of manners.

The present writer became acquainted with Mrs. Fox about a fortnight before the catastrophe which opened her eyes. It was a cruel joke that was played upon her, and proved once again what little consideration women have to expect from the other sex when they are not protected by the strong arm of a male champion, or, failing that, by a blameless reputation.

A masked-ball, in aid of some charitable object, was given at the Pavilion, and Mrs. Fox, who did not generally attend balls, went there under cover of a domino and of a laced mask, which effectually concealed her features. Her companion attended her, and the pair did not mix in the dances, but moved about, watching the fancy dresses and enjoying the music. They had been thus harmlessly disporting themselves during an hour, when one of those ruffians who are to be found in high ranks as well as low strode through the ball in the disguise of a policeman, and with his physiognomy travestied but not masked. He was evidently in search of Mrs. Fox, and must have detected her by the ungainly figure of her

companion; for, upon espying the two women in the Chinese Room, he marched straight up to them, and, laying a hand roughly on Mrs. Fox's shoulder, thrust a paper before her eyes. What was written on this paper was never ascertained, but the unfortunate widow uttered a piercing shriek and swooned on the floor. The pseudo-policeman beat a hasty retreat, and his victim had to be carried into a retiring-room, whence, after a second fainting fit, which left her weak as water, she was sent home in her carriage.

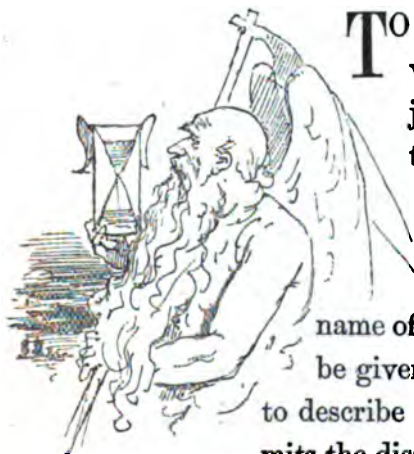
She never showed herself in public again; but within a week sold her furniture and ponies, and for ever quitted Brighton, leaving no clue to her next destination. The brutal joker did not reveal his identity; but the details of his freak transpired and were variously commented on, most men being of opinion that there must have been a grain of truth in the accusations, which else, said they, would never have struck such deep roots. Possibly, however, Mrs. Fox was simply a widow whose misfortune, rather than whose fault, it had been to lose three husbands in countries where there were no coroners and no inquisitive penny papers to harry her with impertinent questions.

**OUR 'SILVERED YOUTH' OR
NOBLE OLD BOYS.**



I.

INTRODUCTORY.



TO those hale old boys who wish to go on enjoying themselves after the manner of youngsters, when their hair is (or would be but for dyes) silvery, the name of 'Silvered Youth' may be given. But I also propose to describe the Old Boy who admits the disabilities of age, as well as the one who affects to ignore them.

The reader will please to accept the notification that under the generic head of 'Noble Old Boys' are included all such old gentlemen as have made a stir in life when young—the quondam pets of Society, the handsome Harrys and hard-riding Dicks of thirty or forty, or even fifty, years ago; the men who were dandies or beaux at the epoch of tall satin stocks and fawn-coloured waistcoats, who resorted to Crockford's, and drove cabs with diminutive grooms hanging on behind; the men of the generation who were boys when Waterloo was fought, and whose spring-tide of life came at a period when to belong to the English aristocracy was to be a member of the best society in the first country of the world. For England was the leading State then, and there were no two opinions about it.

I do not know but that those were better times than now. I should not say this indiscriminately of all bygone epochs, nor is it suggested that half a century ago life was more enjoyable to the masses than it is at present. But it was so to the privileged few. Between 1815 and 1848 there was a halcyon era of transition between the periwigs, drunkenness, and duelling of old England, and the ubiquitous steam-engines, shoddy, and cheap gentility of the new. Society was more select then; the clubs

were more sociable; and travelling, if slower, was a great deal more pleasant.

To go the grand tour in a postchaise of one's own, with a valet, a courier, a tutor, and plenty of letters of introduction, was to see Europe under auspicious circumstances. Cheap tourists had not yet spoiled hotel-keepers, and the respect for the 'milord' was universal. He was received in the first society wherever he went—which is not the case now, when noblemen seldom carry any letters of introduction, unless they mean to settle in a place—and he saw all that was to be seen in the pleasantest fashion. When he returned home, his mind was well stored with lively recollections, and his manners had acquired a polish from contact with foreign aristocracies. He thought the better of his country from the deference which had everywhere been paid him as an Englishman; and having become acquainted with the *élite* of foreigners, he was more disposed to copy what was good in them than what was worthless.

Then England itself, as a habitable place, was more agreeable to noblemen than now. Local customs had not yet died out; provincial society was gay. Elections, county races, hunt-balls—all afforded occasions for noble youngsters to show themselves off in a grand light to the eyes of admiring county belles. It had not yet come to be thought

snobbish for noblemen to dress in a style that marked their rank, and to dash about with four horses, postillions, and outriders. They were ad-



dressed by their titles, and profusely 'kootooed' to by persons who, nowadays, affect to treat them on a footing of equality—lawyers, bankers, and suchlike fry.

The mania for competitive examinations and equality had not set in. At Oxford, the nobleman wore a gold tassel to his college-cap, and took his degree by favour; if he entered the army, he paid for his commission, and bought his way up to a colonelcy before he was thirty. He was not required to know Euclid or *Kriegspiel*; and he amused himself as he listed. He patronised prize-fights, cock-fights, and bear-baitings. He was a frequenter of luxurious hells and privileged night-houses. When he betted in public, or knocked a cad down, no policeman asked him for his card, with a view to a summons; and there was no Divorce Court to bring him unpleasantness when his morals went amiss.

The railways, the telegraphs, the penny post, and the penny press, with joint-stock companies, which have caused wealth to run through a million of rivulets, instead of through a few broad channels, as of old—these so-called boons, which have reformed our institutions, democratised Parliament, abolished the caste spirit of the nobility, and mixed up all classes into a salad—have not given to the wealthy aristocrat a single enjoyment which he did not

possess before. They have spoiled his shooting, and made hunting more difficult. They have taken the gilding off his prestige, forced him to put a curb on his appetites, and induced him to aim at 'respectability,' a term which would have had no sense as applied to a nobleman in the old days.

When the middle-class person in *David Copperfield* remarked that he would rather be knocked down by a man who had blood, than be picked up by one who had none, he gave but a slightly exaggerated expression to a sentiment which was founded on a very solid fact, namely, that a lord was a creature of altogether superior clay to himself. There were Radicals enough in those days who were already declaiming the theories which in these times have been shaped into laws, and have become truisms; but it was the custom to confound Radicals, Dissenters, and innovators generally, under a common and convenient anathema as blackguards, and the fine gentlemen who did this at their clubs were seconded by all reputable newspapers of the period.

Writing of Mr. John Bright in 1840, a leading Tory paper remarked: 'John Bright has gone on a visit to some friends in Yorkshire: let us hope the loyal yeomen of that county will give the disaffected vagabond the hiding he deserves.' At about the same date *The Times* wrote: 'Thomas Babington

Macaulay has gone to show his *uncouth figure* at Windsor.'

Aristocratic haughtiness was natural in an epoch when noble lords thus had incense burned under their noses. It may be said that they get plenty of such free-will offerings now. They do; and their power as a class is perhaps greater than ever, but it is a power held somewhat on sufferance, and which the wielders must feel to be precarious. Like threatened things, it may live long and survive us all—you, me, and the man next door; but this does not alter the fact that young noblemen in these times are of a different quality from their fathers and grandfathers.

In the Noble Old Boys of to-day we have the last representatives of a class who flourished in a period when what might be called the 'Divine right of lords' was at its strongest as a popular creed. In a few more years the last will have been seen of those men who devoutly believed—and acted as if they believed—that there was no human being on earth to compare with a lord, and no country to match with England that bred him. Why, there are some lords nowadays who are cosmopolitans, and have actually come to doubt that a Briton could thrash any two foreigners single-handed!

II.

CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO ALL NOBLE OLD BOYS.

I have searched my memory for facts respecting Noble Old Boys of my acquaintance, and have found types so various that it is only after some little reflection that I have been able to sort them in generic classes. Old Boys differ as much from one another as young ones. Age does not clothe all men in one uniform livery of grayness and wrinkles, for there are



some who show more signs of decrepitude at sixty than others do at eighty.

This one has a bald pate, shrunk shanks, and a red nose; that other frosty white hair, pink cheeks, and a limpid eye. To the one come rheumatism and biliousness; to the other only a little gout now and then, acting as a purgative to all other ills. This Old Boy is a confirmed misogynist and is disliked of women; that other marries at seventy and has children. The good looks of one improve with age; so that, while trotting towards the grave with an alert step and a flower in his button-hole, he is handsomer, nattier, gayer than he ever was, and cuts an altogether winsome figure beside his old chum, who used to be called 'Beau Jack,' and who has dwindled into a cantankerous curmudgeon with a face wrinkled as a baked apple.



In some Old Boys qualities have mellowed like good wine. Gentleness, courtesy, invariable good-humour, indulgence towards human weaknesses, mark the man who has not paid for his experience

too dear; while the cynic, who has nothing kind to say of his fellows, shows that life has not been a successful venture with him, and that in buying experience at the cost of all his illusions he stands in the position of a man who has been charged extravagantly for an article of doubtful value. The suspiciousness of the cynic is not wisdom, though he always accounts it such; it is to the worldly prudence of the shrewd but benevolent Old Boy what vinegar is to wine.

So Victor Hugo was not quite right when he wrote :

'A force de marcher l'homme erre, l'esprit doute,
Tous laissent quelquechose aux buissons de la route—
Les troupeaux leurs toisons et l'homme sa vertu.'

Victor Hugo himself has not let his virtue be shredded by the brambles on the roadside, and he might be cited as a fine type of the Noble Old Boy, who has remained warm-hearted and impulsive despite the snows of years. It may be doubted indeed whether the cynical Old Boy ever had much virtue to lose.

Of the characteristics common to all Noble Old Boys two stand out prominently—selfishness more or less intense, and obstinacy.

If there be unselfish Old Boys they are exceptions who but prove the rule. Selfishness, which is

often a symptom of the instinct of self-preservation, is apt to grow strongly upon a man past middle age. He knows what things are hurtful to him, and is



careful to avoid them. He is anxious about his health. He has made up his mind on certain points of politics and religion, and, not liking to have his

faith in them disturbed, resents conversations which vex or bore him. He has contracted habits which fit him like old shoes, and which he will not exchange for others that would pinch him. Having possibly no family to look after him, he has arrived at the conclusion that if he do not fondle himself nobody else will. If he have a family he sometimes doubts the sincerity of their affections, and he believes that his heirs would not be sorry to see him die.

There are Old Boys who disguise their selfishness so well under a varnish of good manners that it passes almost unperceived; but it will crop up now and then in little points, although these may only be noticeable to the eye of a stranger. In his own household, amongst his relatives or servants, the good Old Boy's whims are not thought to be selfish. They are looked upon as the habits inseparable from age, and women especially will show infinite tenderness in humouring them. Let the Old Boy be fairly good-natured and grateful, and it will be accepted that his years give him a claim to the constant worship and alacritous service of all about him. Every one is accustomed to his ways, and he is waited upon so ungrudgingly that he does not at all suspect that he is putting the smallest tax on the amiability of his familiars.

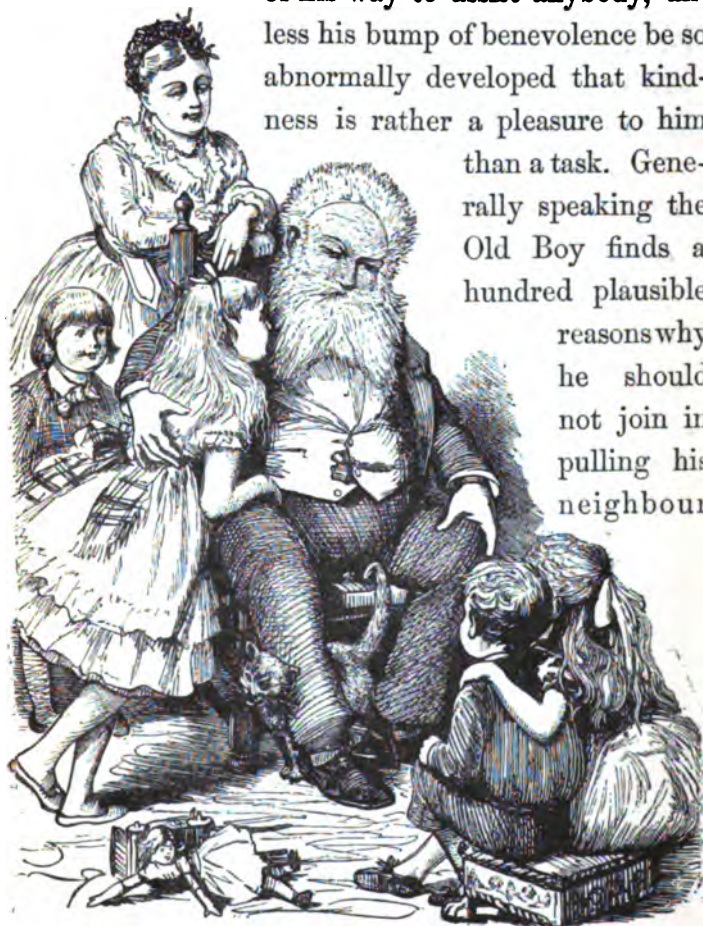
But his selfishness will appear if he be asked to

render any service which would disturb him in the least. The best of Old Boys will not go much out of his way to assist anybody, un-

less his bump of benevolence be so abnormally developed that kindness is rather a pleasure to him

than a task. Generally speaking the Old Boy finds a hundred plausible

reasons why he should not join in pulling his neighbour



out of a pit; and his more or less goodness will be evinced in the considerate formulæ in which he

will clothe his refusal, so that it may not seem brutal.

Obstinacy is another form of selfishness. Old Boys are obstinate in adhering to their ideas because they are persuaded that they have more sagacity than young ones, and they hold to their persuasion because it would humiliate them to suppose the contrary. A surrender of favourite crotchets, which the Old Boy fondly deludes himself to be based on the experience of a lifetime, would involve a shunting of his thoughts into new grooves, where they would not run smoothly. He is by no means inclined to give up his pet prejudices, likes, or dislikes, in deference to the theories of enthusiasts young enough to be his grandchildren.

He does not much believe in theories which advocate change, for he has noticed that *plus ça change et plus c'est la même chose*, as M. Alphonse Karr, a French Old Boy, has dryly put it. He had his own days of infatuation when he was young, and believed that Reform Bills would make the people happy, that the establishment of police would put a stop to crime, and that International Exhibitions would close the era of wars. He has lived to perceive his delusions. So when he hears a young man boast of some new mode of progress which is to result in transforming all mankind, he shakes his head, and feels



ALPHONSE KARR.

inclined to remark, 'I have travelled over that old road, and know too well whither it leads.'

There are as many sorts of obstinacy as there are sorts of men. There is the aggressive, the combative, and the pliant. One Old Boy will rush out, *proprio motu*, to battle against the ideas of the day; another will wait till his own crotchets are assailed before hitting back; a third will not hit back at all, but will parry novelties with a gentle hand, which seems to be always on the point of yielding and never does so.

If the two first varieties supply the backbone of political and social conservatism, it is the last which furnishes the marrow. Water will stop the passage of an express train more effectually than an iron barrier; and there is no such obstructive in the way of progress as the Old Boy who offers a mild and smiling resistance to innovation. He is a converter of women and sentimentalists. He makes weak men hesitate, and damps the ardour of the impetuous. His temperate objections, urged in the blindest tones, cannot be roughly thrust aside; they command respect, and have to be gently overcome by patience and cogent argument such as few men have at their disposal.

This it is that gives the polite, soft-spoken, and withal stubborn Old Boy such an undisputed authority in every social circle. It enables him to play the part of Nestor, and to put forth his prejudices as



the outpourings of a wisdom almost preternatural, though often this so-called wisdom is but error with gray hairs.

III.

POLITICAL OLD BOYS.

Among the Noble Old Boys whom I most admire I know one who may be seen walking down to the Carlton every day towards five o'clock.

He is spare and natty, irreproachably dressed, and of polished manners. In rainy weather he drives down to the club in a quietly appointed brougham, but he generally prefers walking, for the sake of exercise. He must be past seventy now, and can scarcely be said to look younger; for though his gray eyes are clear and his step is elastic, his face is wrinkled like old parchment, and his hair and beard are white as swansdown. His name is Lord Baxtayre, and he is one of the most active wire-pullers on the Tory side.

He has never held office of any sort, though he might often have had it for the asking. He is not a K.G. or a G.C.B.; he never makes speeches; and his influence has never been officially acknowledged by the party-leaders, nor is it alluded to in the press. But he may continually be seen trotting about from

this statesman to that; he acts as intermediary in political negotiations; he helps to make cabinets; he has a voice in the distribution of honours; and a good word from him is of more use to a struggling man than a direct promise from a placeman.

Lord Baxtayre knows more people of note than any other man in London; and this comes of his having been always rich, sociable, unambitious, and unmarried.

He inherited his peerage and 20,000*l.* a year when he was just of age. His income was large enough to satisfy his whims, not large enough to saddle him with duties as a land-owner. His estate was small, and more ornamental than productive; but he drew his money from safe house-property, which increased in value every year, and made him much richer than he seemed to be. An offshoot of one of the great ducal families, he had a footing in the highest and selectest society—that which is intimate with crowned heads; whilst his simple barony allowed him to consort on seemingly equal terms with men who would not have felt at home with a duke or a prince. He had been at Eton and Oxford, but not in the army; and this gave him an additional latitude in choosing his friends, for regimental life draws a man into coteries against his will. Even a guardsman who has sold out after five years keeps

something of pipe-clay about him to the end of his days.

Lord Baxtayre was handsome, clever, and had epicurean tastes, that withheld him from the excesses which produce gross sensations and shatter the nerves and temper. He tasted of dissipation just enough to try its flavour, but without surfeiting himself. He found no pleasure in drinking hard, losing large sums at the gaming-table, or mixing with vulgar wenches who wore diamonds. He devoted a few years to leisurely travel, residing in palaces more frequently than in hotels, and formed a number of acquaintances whose friendship was worth having.

On his return, numerous attempts were made to inveigle him into marriage, and doubtless once or twice he was very nearly being caught; but he surmounted the danger, and never repented it. Without harbouring any objections against matrimony, he was too nice in his requirements to commit himself hurriedly; he had habits which, though unostentatious, were expensive; marriage would have compelled him to retrench; and, before he could make such a sacrifice, he must find a woman for whose sake it would be really worth while to make it. So one chance after another slipped, till my lord found himself too old to marry. Women might not have thought so, but he did. He had so often laughed at the notion of an

Old Boy being able to drive a young wife without accident, that he had the consistency to smile when it was suggested that he should himself make the experiment.

But while leading an unwedded life, Lord Baxtayre had not shunned social gatherings. He passed his autumns and winters in rounds of country visits ; during the London season he was present at all dinners and parties where great and agreeable people were to be met. He also took a secondhand interest in politics, from seeing so many of his friends struggle for the offices of State ; and, without caring much about measures, he looked on with amusement at the game of the men who introduced them. He frequently attended the debates in the House of Lords, and always recorded his vote on party-questions. He did not speak ; but sometimes an old schoolfellow in the Cabinet would put him up to ask a question which Government desired to answer in a way of its own, and Lord Baxtayre was ever ready for such obliging work. In the days of voting by proxy, he held the proxies of several brother peers who were too lazy to come up to town during the dog-days for the purpose of discharging their duty as hereditary legislators. Hence it arose that he was in frequent conference with the party 'whips;' then he came to exercise the functions of an amateur 'whip' himself,

and to canvass for votes when they were wanted on great occasions, not only in the Upper House, but among the Commons.

He did this quite charmingly, for he never mixed up cant with his solicitations. He would talk over a man while sipping coffee after dinner, or between two races at Ascot. He begged support for So-and-So, and said nothing about the Bill which So-and-So was trying to pass. His appeals, being based on personal grounds, were backed by personal allurements; and as he was faithful in seeing to the fulfilment of the promises he made, his arguments often fell into willing ears. He would have haughtily cut any Minister who should have hesitated to grant him the ribbon, the baronetcy, or the post under Government which he had thrown out as a bait to the parliamentary conscience.

He was of great use to young Ministers who had just entered the Cabinet, for he would kindly bespeak fairplay for them at the hands of jealous rivals. His circle of acquaintances comprised members of both parties, and men and women of every age and rank, all of whom looked up to him and were glad to secure his goodwill. As he had never been known to commit a blunder, or to show temper, or to preach nonsense—as he was, indeed, a nobleman every inch—it was felt that he conferred a favour on the men whom

he condescended to cajole, all the more so as he could reward with social benefactions those who did not covet more solid boons. It was wonderful how the persons whom Lord Baxtayre took up were welcomed in society, and equally curious how those upon whom he frowned were dropped. Yet he was not vindictive, and never uttered malicious things. His fiat of displeasure was decreed rather by what he left unsaid than by what he said.

Lord Baxtayre has now arrived at an age when most of the men who manage the business of the country must seem to him mere youngsters. Nor does he think much of them, even making allowance for their rawness. He continues to work at his lobbying trade, because he is asked to do so, no man being so competent as he to smooth ruffled vanities, or to effect reconciliations between politicians who have fallen together by the ears in disputing about the public good.

Ladies, too, often implore him to adjust little quarrels which have arisen in the partition of official loaves and fishes; and there are times when he might fancy himself a cardinal-confessor, so delicate are the points of political casuistry submitted to him by fair lips. Women are never so frank as when consulting a benevolent Old Boy whom they know to be an admirer of their sex. Lord Baxtayre may wag his



head, and declare, laughing, that he has no influence at all—that the things begged of him are quite beyond his power to give; their ladyships know better, and if a first interview fail they try a second.

This secretly flatters the old lord, who has no

mean opinion of himself as a diplomatist, though of late he has rather lost his niceness of perception in reading human character. He has become anecdotal, and is scarcely aware himself how much his good opinion of a man is biassed by the latter's willingness to lead him on into relating old stories about Mr. Canning and Lord Melbourne. He can talk about these worthies by the half-hour. He knows twice as much about the secret history of the Reform Bill as is told in the *Greville Memoirs*; and is confidentially communicative about the scandals which occurred in foreign courts two generations ago. His listeners would often like him to touch on scandals of a later date; but he has too much self-respect to retail tattle about living celebrities. Between the man who be-daubs the characters of the dead and him who defames persons who are alive there is a difference, for the one is a chronicler and the other a tale-bearer. Good old Lord Baxtayre has a horror of tale-bearing, because it is vulgar—the vice of journalists and Methodist parsons.

Politics may conduce to a man's amusement, but, if taken up in an ambitious spirit by a nobleman whose brain rattles rather loose inside his pate, they may produce such a droll distraught creature as poor Lord Crooney.

Crooney started in life with a notion that he would become Prime Minister. He went into the House of Commons; he spouted; he had his hour of success when the fate of a Cabinet depended upon his acceptance or rejection of the seals of the Waste Paper Office. He accepted those seals, and during three months of a Recess he had a predominant voice in Cabinet councils. When Parliament met the Cabinet was thrown out, and Crooney has never from that day to this held office again, even when his party was in; but he has never forgotten those three months of his glory. He has written a book about them; he seasons his daily conversation with allusions to them. They flare out like a patch of scarlet in the gray roll of his past life.

Crooney was consoled with a peerage for his exclusion from place. He had proved himself a noodle, and so it was adjudged that he was worthy to have a permanent hand in making our laws, and that his descendants should do so after him for ever; for such is the Constitution.

He looked upon his coronet as a reward, not as an extinguisher, and it took him years to understand that his party had no intention of requesting his services again. At first he was considerably asked to waive his claims in behalf of some one who might turn dangerous if not introduced into the Cabinet,

but he was promised that preference would be given him at the next vacancy.

Somehow, when that vacancy came, preference was given to some one else; and at the next Whig accession the Administration was formed without Crooney being so much as consulted. Astonishment changing into disgust, he wrapped himself in the dignified sulkiness of one who has been unhandsomely treated. He felt sure that there was some cabal at the bottom of his ostracism, and mentally accused 'that pettifogging A.' and that 'disreputable B.' of fearing him because his visual faculties were too keen; wherefore, desiring to show that he could not be snubbed with impunity, he constituted himself the censor of his party. He made it his business to put taxing questions to the occupants of the Treasury bench in the Upper House; he stuffed his mind with the contents of blue-books; he delivered long and solemn speeches to warn his friends that he only voted for them with great reluctance; and it was gall to him to notice that the newspapers always compressed these wordy harangues of his into twenty lines or so.

Lord Crooney wears one of those spencers that were in vogue thirty years ago; his coat-tails stick out under it, bulging with papers; his nose and cheeks are red; his hat has a long nap, which stands

erect; and all this gives him the air of a Norfolk turkey-cock.

His lordship's resemblance to this proud fowl is still greater when he stands up to speak; for he cranes his wrinkled throat forward, nods a wisp of grayish-red hair which surmounts his brow, and gobbles his words inarticulately. The poor Old Boy cannot understand why the peers troop out of the House as soon as he rises on his legs, so that he is left with the Lord Chancellor, the clerks, the reporters in the gallery, and a casual stranger or two for his audience. He attributes this isolation to a culpable lack of interest in the great questions of the day, and augurs ill of the future of a country whose senators thus turn a deaf ear to the warnings of experience. He has not renounced his hopes of returning to office. He always votes with his party, so as to identify himself with its good and evil fortunes; and it is especially in the hours of defeat that his staunchness comes out. There is something almost pathetic then in the valour with which he rises to do battle for the men who have flouted him. He looks like a veteran chanticleer plying his beak in defence of lusty young cocks.

Lord Crooney is married, but he does not derive much encouragement from his wife. His politics bore her, as they do everybody. Just as Lord

Baxtayre excites interest and amusement whenever he talks, Lord Crooney provokes yawns. The one thinks the other a flippant fellow, the former reckons the latter a dull dog. The discrepancies between the characters of the two are seen in the letters they write. Lord Crooney indites long effusions to *The Times* on all the questions of the day; Lord Baxtayre never pens anything but short private notes, tailing off with a compliment or an epigram. To Crooney jokes about politics seem monstrous; but Baxtayre holds that politics are nothing if not subjects for sarcasm.

When Crooney dies his executors will find drawers full of manuscripts, carefully sorted and indexed, with a view to publication; and out of all this they will not be able to draw the materials of a readable volume. But Baxtayre's executors will not discover a line that will compromise the deceased; and yet the recollections he will have bequeathed will be so numerous and varied, that in fifty years' time anecdotes about the witty Lord Baxtayre will abound in every book that treats of the present era. Nor is it doubtful that there will be several volumes devoted wholly to analysing the character and recording the pithy sayings of this remarkable man.

IV.

A HORSEY OLD BOY.

From Westminster to Epsom the transition is brief, seeing how many links there are in England between politics and horse-racing. Does not Parliament adjourn over Derby-day? Are not grants for Queen's Plates included yearly in the estimates, when proposed grants for a national theatre are scouted with derision? And is not every discussion on the abuses of the turf, betting, the running of two-year-olds, or gate-money meetings, certain to command a full attendance of the House? Nay, at the approach of the Derby, of Ascot week, and of Goodwood, do we not see sweeps at a guinea the ticket organised in the tea-rooms of both Lords and Commons, and Noble Old Boys gadding about to collect subscribers? Who can say that we are not a lively race, considering how much more our lawgivers are interested in questions affecting horses than in those which concern the well-being of our fellow-subjects in India?

Every right-minded person must feel great esteem for the Old Boy who has left a fortune on the turf without dropping a single plume of his character. The

temptations of the turf are so multifarious, and they have transformed so many a well-bred youngster into a blackleg, that I count him to be an exceptionally honest man whom the possession of a racing-stud has impoverished. Rogues of average intelligence are seldom permanently ruined by the turf. They speedily learn the tricks of the trade. What with running 'dark' horses, 'pulling' favourites, laying by commission against their own colours, and scratching at the eleventh hour, they are soon in a position to recoup themselves for the losses which every man endures when he first begins to gamble on horseflesh.

But for the genuine sportsman, who is devoted to horse-racing as a gallant sport; who buys judiciously, trains carefully, backs his own stable through thick and thin, and aspires only to win his cups and his money fairly—for such a one there is generally no recouping. He is like a guileless countryman playing cards against sharpers. His trainer, jockeys, and stable-boys will mostly be in league against him; for the honester he is, so much the less chance will they have of making money, except by betraying his interests. Things have come to the pass that an upright stud-owner must be prepared to pay 20,000*l.* a year for his amusement, or, if he cannot afford this, he must become bankrupt.

Among those who have been reduced to the latter fate, I know of no more genial Old Boy than Lord Trottingham. He comes of a stock who have always been as honest as adventurous; two qualities which mate as well as a dean on a runaway charger. He took to the turf when young, because he liked it. He had a large fortune then, and doubted not that by making a good selection of yearlings, intrusting them to a shrewd trainer, and running them with crack jockeys up in all the principal races, he should be able, if not to clear large profits, at least to pay his expenses. Stated conversationally, the speculation seemed safe enough to convince the seven sages of Greece. In any other walk of life but the turf the system must have led to a success. What more can a man do to woo success than to deserve it?

Somehow, though Lord Trottingham never did anything but lose money by the hatful. His trainer so managed things that he was always lured on to risk large sums on chances which seemed dead certainties. Every year the stable turned out some beautiful horse that did wonders at starting. One year it was a colt that carried off the Two Thousand Guineas, another year a filly that won the One Thousand in a canter. On the strength of these achievements, my lord never failed to pile up his bets on the Derby, Oaks, &c., mountains high, his



trainer exhorting him to do so: 'Never fear, my lord, we'll win you the blue ribbon,' was this worthy's regular assurance. But though Lord Trottingham's horses might head the betting, and though they might struggle gamely in front of the whole field until within sight of the winning-post, something always occurred in the last fifty yards to make them lose.

Sanguine as he was, Lord T. had to give up this sport at last. He had felled all his timber, dipped his estates into mortgages as far as they would go, and taken to kite-flying into the bargain. The day came when his last hopes depended on a Derby, and he lost. Those who saw him in the Stewards' Stand on this memorable occasion say it was pitiful to hear the accents in which he exclaimed, 'Highflyer wins!' as the crack of a rival stable dashed past his own favourite just on the post. Had the result been otherwise he would have won 200,000*l.*; as it was, this failure proved his last 'plunge,' and soon afterwards the flood of his debts washed him to the feet of one of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy in Basinghall-street.

The owner of an entailed property is seldom quite beggared; and Lord Trottingham still contrived to make a tolerable figure on the income which his creditors allowed him. Moreover, he eked it out with literary productions. He had good grit in him, and found that he could turn his turf experiences to account by acting as correspondent to sporting papers. Editors were proud to employ him, as well they might; for the initial 'T.,' wherewith he signed his contributions, soon came to attract attention as a symbol of sound judgment and truth.

No man could give an opinion on horseflesh in

terms so shrewd as this peer, who had been so oft accused of infatuation as to the merits of his own horses. Without pretending to be a prophet, he generally selected the winners of the great events; and he might have ended by restoring his fortunes had he chosen to back his opinion with heavy sums. But he was too thoroughly honourable to risk a single guinea more than he could pay. There had never been a smudge of any sort on his name, and it would have broken his heart if he had been obliged to abscond to Boulogne after being posted as a defaulter at Tattersall's. He was content if he could net a snug 500*l.* a year by his bets; and when he found that he could earn about twice as much by his pen, he generously surrendered the allowance made him by his creditors, though the doing so obliged him to pinch himself not a little; for he was unversed in the art of making shillings go a long way.

A Noble Old Boy this, and a prime favourite on the turf. Trainers, jockeys, book-makers, all know his cheery gray head and the sound of his breezy voice, buoyant and fresh as healthy weather. He never misses a race of importance, except when a touch of gout lays him up now and then, as a penalty for a little too much indulgence in port-wine. He is a steward of several meetings, and as a member of the Jockey Club was often consulted about handicaps

by the infallible 'Admiral,' now departed. But Lord Trottingham is too much of a sportsman not to feel that horse-racing in these days is becoming less and less a thing of fair-play. His eyes have opened at last to the tricks of trainers; and though his experience has come too late to be of much use to himself, he endeavours to convey it to the rising generation in the occasional articles which he devotes to the exposure of turf abuses. He has a capital literary style, pungent, good-humoured, and gentlemanlike. He has published a book of anecdotal reminiscences, and now and then breaks out into poetry, tuning society verses with gay jingling rhymes, pleasant as the bells of a sleigh.



V.

AN M.F.H.

One of Lord Trottingham's fastest chums is 'Old Grumby,' as he is called in the shires—Sir Thomas Grumby as he figures in the *Baronetage*. This is an Old Boy who has devoted the energies of a lifetime to pursuing foxes, and who is more persuaded than ever at five-and-sixty years of age that Providence created the fox for no other purpose than to afford sport to gentlemen like himself.

He and Trottingham were at school together, and afterwards served in the same cavalry regiment, where they were both famed for their hard and straight riding to hounds. They had slim waists then, and would have thought it preposterous for a man weighing seventeen stone to gallop across country as Sir Thomas now does. The Old Boy will do Banting, as his doctors advise; he likes his beer, potatoes, and game-pies; but he is determined to hunt all the same, and is much perplexed to find animals strong enough to carry him.

Tom Grumby never had a racing-stud, and it



was a pity that Trottingham did not hearken to his friend's caution against embarking in such speculations. 'What is the fun of making others race when you can gallop yourself?' T. G. used to say; and he would boast that hunting gave you all the excitement to be got from the turf, and for a tithe of the expense. There was the excitement of being pitched on one's head included. Old Grumby has broken nearly every limb in his body, and has tried every variety of posture for descending off a saddle against one's will. But bumps and fractures have not shaken his nerves, and, as he philosophically remarks: 'It is better to be pitched off one's seat



into a soft ploughed field, than to go a cropper in the Bankruptcy Court as poor Trott has done.'

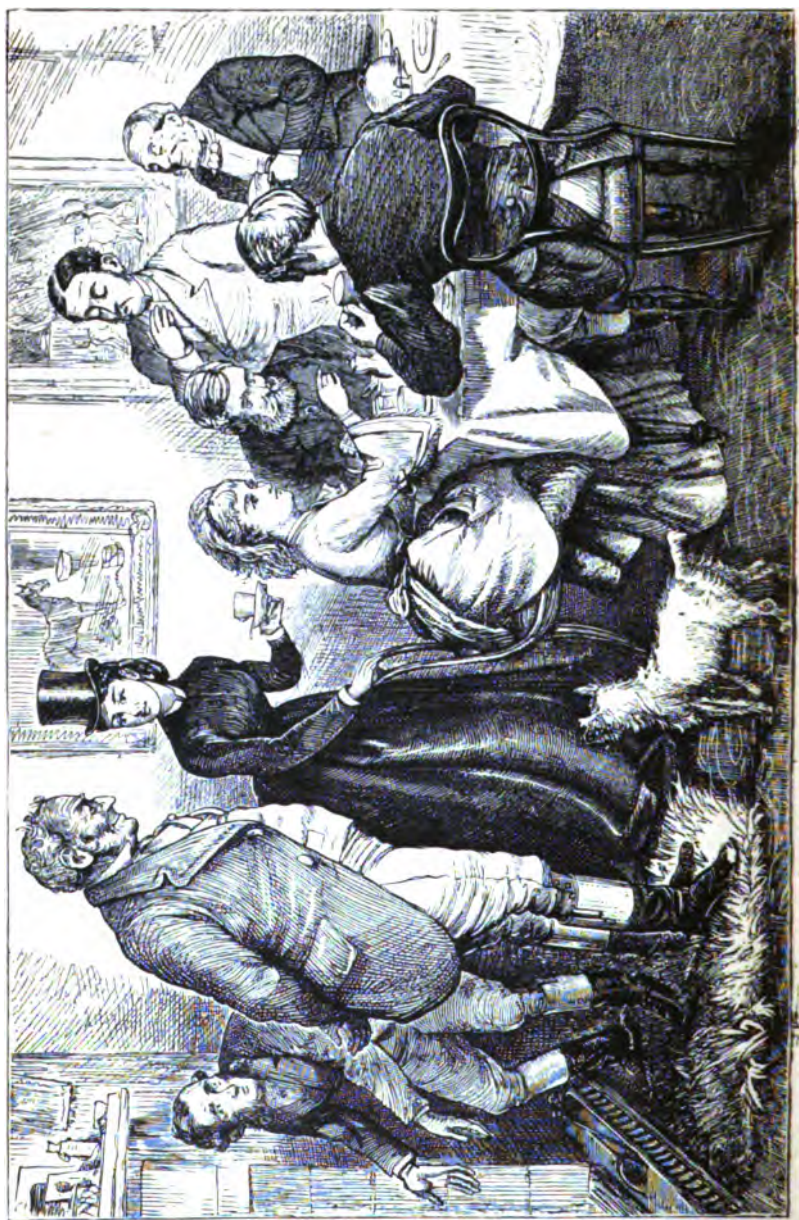
Old Grumby is a great power in his county, for he hunts the best pack there, and discharges his duties as M.F.H. in a whole-hearted spirit. No general could be more anxious in planning a campaign than the Old Boy in catering for the winter's sport of his subscribers. He is vigilant to see that

earths are not stopped by crusty keepers, that fences are not wired by sulky farmers, and that ditches shall not be widened in any part of the country without due notice being given to him in writing, to prevent accidents.

He has his serious doubts as to whether land-owners ought to be allowed to make alterations in their fields without permission from the hunt. He calls it spoiling land to change its surface in any way, whether by dyking, draining, or building. He loathes the sight of an engineer coming to trace the line of a new railway. Once he got himself elected to Parliament, chiefly to oppose the cutting of a line which would have destroyed one of the best runs in his district, and he succeeded. The line had to go somewhere else.

There is a Lady Grumby, and a number of young Grumbys, varying between eight years old and eighteen, who all have horses or ponies, and hunt as soon as they can be trusted to face a hedge without blinking. Old Grumby superintends this part of their education himself, and he has never yet been saddened by seeing one of the youngsters play the 'funk.' The boys are accustomed to be thrown headlong among turnips; the girls think nothing of getting soused in a broad ditch. If so be that the patriarchs hunted, they must have looked as old

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BREAKFAST BEFORE THE MEET, AT ORUMBY HALL.

Grumby does when he rides home of an evening after a stiff day, with all his young people behind him.

Grumby Hall is full of foxes' brushes, pads, and masks. It is a family custom that each of the youngsters must win his or her first gold watch by being in at a 'death;' and the M.F.H. is wont to apportion the pocket-money of his offspring according to their prowess in the field. Goodness knows what prodigies have been achieved by the young missies in view of obtaining trinkets to wear at the hunt-balls. Jewelry and fox-slaying are so naturally associated in their minds, that when they see a girl with earrings and a necklace, they interpret these things to be badges of distinction, like the stripes on a sergeant's sleeve.

The girls, like the boys, hang their trophies in their rooms. They can saddle their horses without the help of a groom; they wear leather breeches when mounted; they would flout the man who should propose to show them the way over a hedge; and they will never marry any but fox-hunters, lest they disgrace themselves in the eyes of old Grumby, who would scarcely admit that a non-hunter could be a gentleman, unless he had a wooden leg which debarred him from riding, or an empty purse which kept him from buying a



proper mount. On this last point the Old Boy is extremely touchy, and confesses that a man who cannot afford a good horse had better not hunt at all, than turn a noble sport into ridicule.

On his off-days old Grumby does a little shooting, but his preserves are not over-stocked, for he

hates *battues*. He thinks that a man should have to toil after his game, whatever it is, and he would disown a son whom he should catch entering for a pigeon-match. He encourages them to play cricket in the summer, or to boat; but he prefers polo or a little desultory steeplechasing for practice. The month of May generally sees him in London buying hacks, ponies, and clean half-breds for next year's use. He has to exercise considerable judgment in the selection of the small Shetland that will carry his youngest girl, and the fifteen-hand black mare who will not prove too much for the second Miss Grumby, who has just turned sixteen.

For himself, the exigencies of his growing girth make him each year harder to suit. He casts about for colossal brutes seventeen hands high, and with as much wind as pneumatic machines. These cost dear; but he is no curmudgeon in buying horse-flesh, having never yet found a cheap horse but proved too dear in the long-run. However, his shrewdness often enables him to get easy terms for animals whose owners have not suspected them to be so good as they turn out when they have been trained in the Grumby stables.

For the festivities of London our M.F.H. does not care a rap; and he resigned his seat in Parliament because of the duties it laid upon him in the

matter of going to parties. He divides his time between Tattersall's, the shows at the Agricultural Hall, and his club, where he dines with other ruddy





AT THE CATTLE SHOW.



Old Boys from the shires. His drinks are beer, port-wine, and brandy-and-water, and he has no high opinion of your light French wines and vinegary Rhenish vintages, which sour the palate, he says, without warming the blood. In the evening he plays whist at half-a-crown the point; and it would not be easy to find an Old Boy who can do a more gallant rubber, never getting excited if he wins, or looking glum if he loses. Many a professed gamester might take pattern by him; but as with hunting, so with whist, old Grumby thinks it essential to accept the ups and downs of fortune with a smiling face. Some fathers might possibly raise their children to a higher intellectual level than this Old Boy, but none could better inculcate in them the principles which make brave men and honest women. The young Grumbys are frank, fearless, and truthful, and no more could be said for an Archbishop's progeny.

VI.

THE THEATRICAL OLD BOY.

Not the superannuated actor, nor the playwright whose hand has lost its cunning, and who has consequently turned critic, nor the managerial Old Boy, who is often a queer type to study; but the Old Boy who has been a patron of the drama from his youth up, and still makes it his chief business to attend theatres, paying for his place, and never begging free admissions.

This is a point to be noted; for the Old Boy who figures on free lists, or who coaxes tickets out of authors and journalists, is invariably a grumbler. He compares every new performer disparagingly with Macready, the Kembles, and the two Keans—though while the younger Kean was alive, he said that the man could not hold a candle to his father. He says the same of Charles Mathews, Farren, and of every other actor who has had a father on the stage. Take him to see Toole, and he remembers how much better Liston was; when seeing J. S. Clarke, he shrugs his shoulders, and quotes the name of some

bygone comic whom none recollects save himself. Not even the beauty and grace of modern women find favour in his sight, and he is not content unless he can hint that the race of tragedy queens, and even of *soubrettes*, has become extinct. He growls at scenery, at costume, at dialogue. He professes to be a classic, and to bemoan the contempt into which the 'unities' have fallen. The very improvements in the accommodation for the audience—the luxury of the boxes and the soft-cushioning of the stalls—strike him as evidences of theatrical decadency.

The genuine Theatrical Old Boy is not such an atrabilious creature. I know one, named Lord Lama-tour, whose judgment on dramatic matters I would sooner accept than that of any critic alive. It must have been about the time of the O.P. riots at Covent Garden that he was first taken to the play, but his memories of the past do not cramp his appreciation of the present. He renders justice to bygone worthies—and doubtless there were pretty faces behind the footlights when he was young, which, looked back upon now, strike him as comelier than any he has seen since; but he is the first to own that this may be only the enchantment of distant view. On the whole, he thinks the stage has improved rather than declined; and he has even his doubts as to whether the divine Garrick and Peg Woffington would be so

much applauded now as they were in the last century, when sententious declamation was the fashion.

As it is not in the nature of Old Boys to cast any slur on the days of their youth, I think that Lord Lamatour's optimism respecting present times hangs upon a little personal circumstance. He was born a younger son, and during the first forty-five years of his life was comparatively poor; but fifteen years ago he came somewhat unexpectedly into the possession of his earldom, with a large rent-roll, and from that time the world began strewing flowers upon his path. He had always been a frequenter of play-houses, but his straitened circumstances would not allow of his associating with actors and actresses as he would have loved to do. The society of these persons is expensive; and not only that, but a needy young nobleman who mixes on terms of equality with his inferiors risks being treated with too much familiarity. With a *grand seigneur* the case is different. He can condescend without forfeiting his dignity, and be familiar without being paid back in the same coin. He is a patron of the drama, whose interest in the members of the profession is gratefully acknowledged as the symptom of a generous spirit.

Now Lord Lamatour had all his life aspired to play the Mæcenas in theatrical circles, and as soon as his means allowed him to do so he set about realising

the dream with not less ardour than the youth of twenty who is admitted for the first time into a greenroom. His advances were amiably welcomed. Actors are not coy, nor are actresses. A wealthy peer who is not prosy or straitlaced, and whose compliments to consummate talent are often paid in diamonds, is listened to with respect whenever he hazards an observation on the rendering of a part. His advice will be solicited before he gives it, and his pupils will strive to excel for his sake. Lord Lamatour's criticisms whispered behind the scenes were more potent than those of the enlightened censors who write for the press; and the tapping of his white-gloved hands in a stage-box was often more gratifying than the raptures of a whole audience. His lordship was soon known for a staunch patron of the stage, as open-handed as he was wise, and as indulgent as he was discriminate. He spent very large sums upon actresses—less upon actors.

Imagine a tall and burly Old Boy, with a carefully combed and perfumed white beard, a high-bridged nose, with a double eyeglass on it, and silvery curling hair parted down the middle. He dresses rather loudly, and in evening costume shows a great deal of shirt-front, with one large opal stud in the middle. He has always a full-blown rose or camellia in his button-hole, generally the gift of some



fair comedian; and a sprinkle of white dust on his lapels and sleeves, as if he had run against a baker. This is the violet-powder which actresses use for their faces. How it comes upon Lord Lamatour's coat is no business of mine.

I have seen him in the *foyer* of the Grand Opera at Paris surrounded by *coryphées*, who assailed him three deep. He bantered them in capital French. They rifled his pockets for sugar-plums; one pulled his beard, another ran her fingers through his hair,



a third slipped her photograph into his hand. I learned that it was his habit to come to this *foyer* every night, and he was regarded as the Providence of the whole *corps de ballet*. He had distributed a good many hundred-franc notes among them, and had invited several to sup with him. When the call-boy summoned them on to the stage, they trooped off blowing him kisses; and when they returned, flushed and tired, from their dancing, he

would order champagne from the refreshment-room, and gad about from one girl to the other, paying them pretty compliments all round while they sipped his health. The only regret of these young ladies was that the magnificent milord's visits to Paris were of such short duration. They promised to rear him a statue in sugar-candy if he would get himself naturalised a Frenchman; but what would have become then of Lord Lamatour's English *protégées*?

Apart from his philogynic proclivities, Lord Lamatour has a real taste for the business of the stage, and keenly enjoys good dramatic literature. He has an eye for effect and a talent for suggesting situations. Younger peers, who have theatres of their own out of which they strive to make money, often ask his opinion about manuscripts that have been submitted to them; and he seldom makes a mistake in discerning whether the author has theatrical genius. A man may be a first-rate novelist and yet a very poor playwright, as he knows; and again, a man may possess the faculty of admiring French pieces without having the gift to adapt them for the British stage. Lord Lamatour has saved more than one manager from costly failures by indicating what are the points in an adapted piece which would not suit English tastes, and ought to

be left out. Other managers, for not having listened to his advice, have repented too late.

His lordship has often been asked why he does not build and endow a theatre himself; but he is an eclectic, whose pleasure in roaming from house to house would be gone if he entered the trade, so to say, and identified himself with a special venture. He does not give his preference to any particular branch of the drama. He loves a leg-piece, and he delights in a well-acted Shakespearian tragedy. He may be seen at the Lyceum as often as at the Strand; and he will drive in the same evening from his box at the Court to his stall at either of the two opera-houses. To a shallow-witted person, who inquired of him whether he liked a melodrama as much as an operetta, he replied that this was like asking him whether he preferred roast beef to a strawberry ice. He enjoys both.

His eclecticism extends to the performers, whose merits he gauges with a rare good sense. He does not contrast one with another, but tests each player's doings by the standard of nature, and requires no more than that an actor or actress should do his or her best. He is so grateful to those who contribute to his pleasure that he always bestows unqualified praise on a sincere artistic effort; and though he exhibits no signs of impatience when things go wrong, those

who are intimately acquainted with him soon perceive that no clumsy piece of acting ever escapes his eye. He does not like geese; and it has been noticed that, although he is profuse in his blandishments towards all feminine members of the profession, those whom he favours with solid proofs of his favour are the ones who have talent.

He has quite a paternal way of saying, 'You are making rapid progress, my dear. A little more practice and you will touch perfection.' To some he has caused private lessons to be given at his expense; others have been sent by him to Paris to study the best models at the Français and Gymnase; and to others, who, leading quiet lives, were unable to afford such gorgeous clothes as their flightier sisters, he has presented rich and tasteful costumes, that they might appear to their best advantage. So this is an Old Boy who will not have passed through this vale of tears to no purpose.

VII.

THE OLD BOY CRICKETER.

I pass from Lord Lamatour to the cricket-field because I recollect having seen, some twenty years ago, an amateur performance at the Canterbury Theatre, all the actors being cricketers. It was during that bat-and-ball carnival held annually in Kent during August, and known as the Canterbury Week. Among the players that year was one who even then was pretty well stricken in years, and whose agility on the boards was as remarkable as his doings at the wicket. He had played in the three matches of the week, and had run up double scores in every innings, besides taking a few stumps and making some nimble catches. Nevertheless he had resolved upon retiring from public matches, because, said he, the cricket of these times was no more cricket according to his notions.

At the close of the last of those amateur performances at the theatre the veteran came before the curtain, dressed in the garb of a cricketer of fifty years ago, and sang, or rather growled, a comic song on

the changes which had crept over the national game. He wore a black-beaver hat, a white collar, and a satin stock, a striped-cotton shirt and white ducks—no pads or gloves—and carried a narrow round-backed bat, which looked more like a magnified rolling-pin than like one of those smooth broad implements of cane and willow which batsmen handle nowadays. In his song he dealt some hard hits at the reckless slogging and the swift over-hand bowling which were then just settling into fashion; and these taunts at the young generation were enthusiastically applauded—not because they were palatable, but because the singer was that doughty Old Boy, Lord Batmore.

His lordship had been in his prime in the days when Kent could beat all England with that mighty five—Felix, Wenman, Hillyer, Fuller Pilch, and Alfred Mynn. Scores of a hundred were not common in those days, nor were wides and byes; and it would have made any of the five laugh aloud to see thirty and forty set down for extras, as one often can in these times of greased-lightning swifts. As bowling was under-hand then, and pitched straight for the wicket at a medium pace, the science of batting mostly consisted in defence. Runs off a slip were almost impossible, and a cut fetched three at the outside. Lord Batmore remembers the introduction of

pads and gloves, which he long disdained as effeminate; and to the last he was one of those who wore but one pad and one glove. Perhaps he will live to see the day when batsmen will play with leathern brassards and fencing-masks. He has often prophesied that he will.

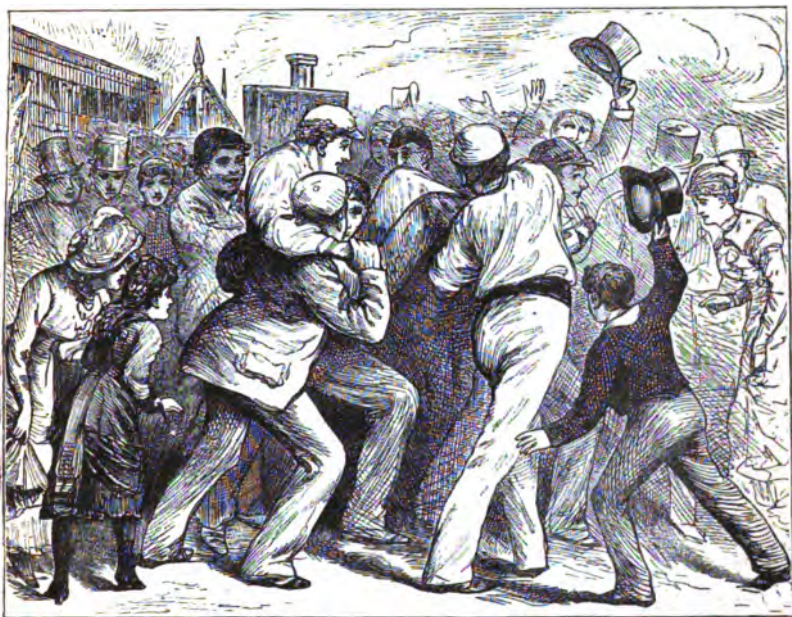
He married soon after retiring from the field, and begat sons and daughters, though, as above said, he was already well on in life. I saw him last year at Lord's, on the Eton and Harrow match-day, watching the exploits of a boy of his who wore the light-blue cap. He has three others at school, and the eldest, who plays for the University team, at Oxford. All these youngsters have of course adopted the modern tactics; and it was curious to watch the Old Boy, seated on one of the M.C.C. benches outside the Pavilion, and struggling between fatherly pride and professional disgust, as he saw young Batmore square his shoulders for one slog after another, without ever deigning to block. The Harrovian bowlers seemed to chuck the ball now at his legs, now at his head, now at the stomach of 'slip' or 'short-leg,' anywhere, in fact, but at the wicket; and young Batmore hit slashers now to the ropes, now to the Pavilion, now far beyond the telegraph.

One truly mammoth swipe cleared the whole ring of spectators and carriages, and sent the ball

rebounding against the wall of the tennis-court, whereat the thousands of old and present Etonians



on the ground broke into a hurricane of cheers. But the Old Boy, half smiling, half grumbling, vowed that a twister ought not to be punished like a long hop, and all this was fluking. At last a ball found its way by chance to the Etonian's middle stump, which it drove somersaulting a dozen yards behind the wicket-keeper, removing the latter's cap in the transit. 'There, I told you how it would be!' exclaimed the Old Boy pathetically. But young Batmore had made more than a hundred, and was the



hero of the day. He was one of those brilliant emulators of Mr. Thornton, whose scores alternate generally between duck's eggs and treble figures—bold spirits, always in extremes.

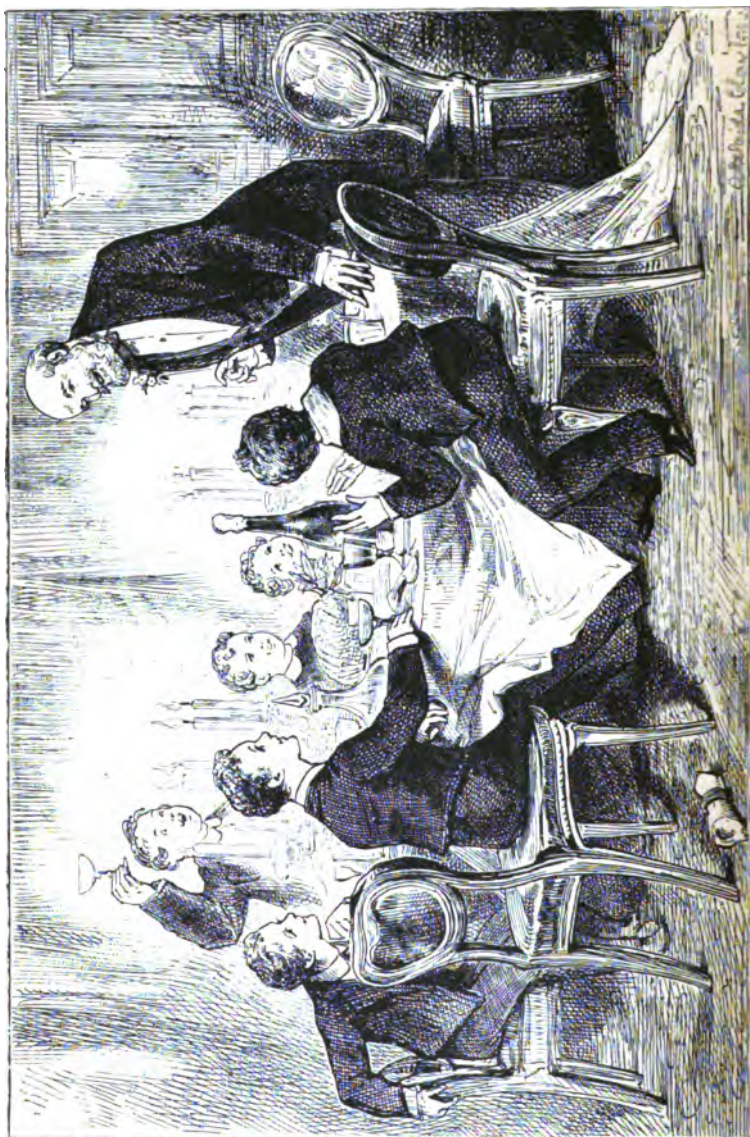
Now if old Lord Batmore has a principle which he cherishes, it is this, that a good cricketer ought to be 'safe for two dozen.' He inculcated this lesson on his brats when they first began to learn under him in their own Kentish park; and every time they come home for their holidays he puts them through their facings, asking them to block some of his antiquated slows if they can. They are good boys, and

allow the old fellow to bowl them out easily, so that he may not think his hand out of gear; likewise when he himself stands to the wicket his two elders, who could splinter a two-inch plank at thirty yards, are careful to send him half volleys, which he puts away with judicious deliberation for twos and threes. Thus he still fancies himself equal to the best talent of the day; and, not noticing the humorous twinkle in the eyes of the dutiful lads when he makes this boast, he asks them why it is they do not model their style upon his.

One of his favourite recreations is to go down to Eton during the summer, and watch the practice in the playing fields. The masters and boys all know him as one of the kindest Old Boys alive; with his white hat perched jauntily over his rubicund face, his white waistcoat, blue necktie, and white gaiters falling sprucely over his boots, he looks the incarnation of all that is jolly and neat. He takes his stand under the trees, criticising the points of this and that new player, and is always listened to with respect, and even with some faith, by the members of the eleven whom his sons introduce to him.

But cricket is not like horseracing; it has undoubtedly made a stride onwards, and the Old Boy is often quite wrong in underrating the difficulties of the new system of batting and bowling. If his sons

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LORD BAIMORE AND THE ETON BOYS.

tried to follow his lessons they would find themselves in as bad straits as a man with a flint-lock duelling with another holding a Snider; and they would never gladden their parent's heart by sporting those blue caps, of which he is as proud as they.

Cricket, which throws an Old Boy a great deal among young ones, is an honest pastime, softening the manners, and keeping the spirits at an even temperature of cheerfulness. It is rare to find a cricketer who is infirm of temper or dissolute in his morals. Lord Batmore is not only a jolly Old Boy; he is right-minded, gentle, and generous. See him at the White Hart at Windsor, surrounded by a parcel of boys whom he has invited to come and dine with him off ducks and peas and champagne-cup. How well he knows their tastes, and enters into their concerns, young ambitions, and cares! He talks to them in the language they understand, and wins their hearts long before he has administered the tips which seal him in their estimation as a regular brick. One could not augur well of a lad who failed in respect towards such a thoroughly good English gentleman as this veteran champion of the finest outdoor game which was ever invented to harden the muscles of natives and puzzle the understanding of foreigners.

VIII.

THE AGRICULTURAL OLD BOY.

I must go to Wales for my next type of Old Boy ; not but that I could select as good a one nearer home : but Wales has preserved its language and local customs, so that Welsh squires exhibit characteristics not to be found among their English brethren. They are more rugged and patriarchal. In the northern part of the Principality they have preserved the Celtic type pure ; they have red or flaxen polls and blue eyes ; they are hospitable, and, when not offended, amiable ; but it is easy to offend them, for their sensitiveness is as great as in the days when Shakespeare depicted all his Welshmen as men of choleric mood.

We have come to witness a distribution of prizes after an agricultural show at a place whose name is difficult to spell, though we may call it Crwllm, leaving the purist to throw in an extra *w* or two if it suits him. The judges are seated on a red platform, with a show of silver tankards and medals before them. They are a fine collection of graybeards, with clear-cut

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THE AGRICULTURAL OLD BOY.

"He accepts their homage as his due, and stalks among them with a head some inches taller than theirs."

features and firm chins, that could not well be matched for manliness; but they are waiting for a better man than them all, Sir Evan Jones, the squire of the district, who has not yet arrived. Here he comes! and see how all rise to make way for the Old Boy, who is older than the oldest by ten years, though his hair is but iron-hued. He accepts their homage as his due, and stalks among them with a head some inches higher than theirs, addressing one of them as 'young man,' and another as 'my boy;' then he takes the chair, and proceeds to make two speeches—the one in English for the gentry, the other in rough Gaelic for the peasantry at the far end of the room, to whom he speaks as if they were his children. Sir Evan is, in fact, near his eightieth year, but comes of the stubborn Silurian race, whom time cannot subdue without a long struggle. His face was olive-tinted, and it is now bronzed; his hair was once like polished ebony, and it now resembles the same wood unpolished and seasoned. His manner is more soft and courteous than of a young man; but even if he lives another ten years he will probably retain the elastic spirits and the ready acceptance of novelties which entitle him to the name of boy.

He was only a boy when he begged his father to buy him sixty acres of marsh and two of rock that

were lying idle on the other side of the 'river.' In North Wales anything is a river. The father, half in sport, acceded to his request, wondering what would come of it. Evan's first year's rent was a goose, from a rustic who pastured there his downy flock. There was laughter when the juvenile proprietor handled a carving-knife for the first time, and was asked whether he meant to lease all his acres on goose tenure; and so there is laughter now, but of another sort, when he points to his orchard, his belt of oaks, and the thorn-trees in his horse-pastures, saying, in blunt style, 'I have worked there, man and boy, for sixty years, and ye see the result of it.'

He is so intensely fond of the place that he seldom leaves it. Just to try what the land could do, he has gained successively almost every prize that the country gives for plant or beast; but his real pride is in his men. He is never tired of telling how three of the fellows beat six rick-burners who were being paid to destroy all the hay in two counties. At first sight you would think that his whole heart lay in his land, so proud he is of his own breed of cobs, formed by careful selection from Powisland ponies and Arabs newly imported; so grandly he answers your praises of anything about his house, from the carpets to the cheeses: 'All home made.' In common conversation

the Old Boy seems to grow more and more rustic at every subject that is mentioned. Talk to him of travel, he answers, 'What, go and find all countries worse than my own, and then come back to find my own home worse than I left it? There never was a more lovely spot than Trefachgen; and then what would my people do if I left them? As to change of air, I am continually in the air, and the air is always changing. The scenery changes too, as you would soon see if you knew it as well as I do. Change of society? When I want to see more people I invite them, and they come fast enough if there's dinner on the table. As for those who live here, I never grow tired of them.'

This is how Sir Evan Jones speaks. His views of business are old-world views; he will not be a magistrate, because his people and the neighbours listen with respect to his friendly arbitration, while they would be nearly sure to grumble at the very same decisions if given from the Bench. 'What do I know of law?' he asks. 'Outside Trefachgen people do as they please, inside it they do as I please. That is my idea of law.'

Ask him if he sells game, and he says, 'No; I never learned the trade, and I leave it to those who have to live by it. I can sell live animals, but not dead meat.' Once, when he was selling one of his

far-famed cobs, the purchaser hinted at 'a month on trial.' He seemed to think he was bargaining for a sewing-machine. Sir Evan seldom lost his temper, but the insult then was too strong for him. In the language of his childhood, on which he fell back when excited (for those Welshmen are great swearers), he thundered forth, 'Siacced a llodrau! is a month's trial a test for a Trefachgen four-year-old? Take the brute, and try him for twenty years; if he breaks down under fair treatment, I'll give you another for nothing!' The purchaser shook his ears as if they had been cuffed, and apologised.

But with all his love for his bachelor home—for he has never taken a wife—the squire of Trefachgen has a heart none the less for relatives and family friends. He cannot be kept long from servants of his own training and cattle of his own rearing, nor, as he calls them, 'his home-brewed plantations;' but he pays visits of three days at a time to many houses in the neighbourhood. There is no railway near him; and if there were, he would only use it to provide employment for his tenants' sons. For pleasure he would travel by road; and when he fares forth on business he travels over his own fields. He says pleasantly that his fields are his bankers; they give him good interest, and do not run away with his capital.

So when he strolls about he thoroughly enjoys

himself: every neighbour welcomes him; and if he have one amusement that pleases him more than others, it is to attend all the weddings in the county. For these occasions he dons a curious blue coat, with gilt buttons, and a gray-beaver hat, with long fur, which stands up on end at the least breath of wind; likewise his gala snuff-box of gold—for he is an inveterate snuff-taker, and delights to pass his rappee among young men and maidens to make them sneeze. Of a facetious spirit, he delivers appropriate speeches at wedding-breakfasts, and he gives abundance of presents suited to every style of housekeeping. Jewelry, silks, and gewgaws are not in his line; and he plainly tells brides with a tendency to young-ladyism that, if they cannot make puddings and cheeses, milk the cow, and groom the cob at a pinch, their bridegrooms will have made a bad bargain in marrying them. The Old Boy has the privilege of saying and doing much as he pleases: if he have eccentricities, his good qualities more than redeem them; and if he ever had serious faults, he has fought against them so long that they are not easily discovered in him now. He has been urged by his admirers to enter upon a more public life—for admirers generally push one to do the wrong thing; but he refuses, saying that he knows well enough on what scale he is built; that, in his little place, he feels



that he is master, but among greater men he would be lost.

Certainly he looks a little lost when he comes up to London now and then, at very rare intervals, to see relatives who have settled in town, and have grown too infirm to travel into Wales. He alights at odd out-of-the-way hotels in Holborn or the City, which were renowned in the coaching days. Here

his early hours confound boots and the chambermaid; for he is afoot by five o'clock in the summer, and, finding no shops open at that hour—to his great disgust—trudges off to Covent Garden, and breakfasts at one of the taverns near that market which open very early in the morning for the accommodation of carters and salesmen. The odd hours between breakfast and nine o'clock, when tradesmen begin to take down their shutters, he devotes to long rambles through the empty streets; and he picks up quite a mass of information about the topography of the big town. As he has a capital memory, and can recollect where such and such a house or street stood in old days, his walks afford him subjects for rumination on the destructive tendencies of metropolitan improvements; but he is never at a loss to find his way, having a shrewd faculty for divining why this or that new thoroughfare was pierced and whither it must naturally lead.

Sir Evan belongs to no club, and despises cabs. Availing himself of his stay in town to make wholesale purchases of such things as cannot easily be procured in Wales, he tramps about all day, with a gingham under one arm and a sheaf of parcels under the other. When hungry, he turns into an eating-house, and lunches off two chops and a pint of port. In the evening, having walked about twenty-five

miles in the course of his day's wanderings, he dines with his friends, sits telling them anecdotes till ten o'clock, and then walks back to his hotel, without an overcoat or comforter. He has never owned such luxuries; he has never lain abed later than six; and he has never been ill except once, when he broke his leg at the age of sixty, from being thrown off a cob which had been frightened by one of those accursed steam-ploughs, which one of his neighbours had set up, to the shame of good husbandry.

I am concerned to add that this excellent gentleman makes but a sparing use of baths; such womanish things not having yet been advocated on sanitary grounds when he was a boy. Once when he had caught a chill in London a doctor advised him to try a Turkish bath, and he repaired to the Hammam in Jermyn-street; but he had no sooner penetrated into the sudarium than he strode out again, laughing and swearing at the oafishness of men who baked themselves like potatoes for amusement. He took a header into the plunge-bath like a boy, and there was an end of his chill.

IX.

THE WICKED OLD BOY.

I would rather write of good Old Boys than of bad; but I must call attention to a very slippery kind of old fish who leads captive silly little minnows of the other sex. His name is the Honourable Mr. Spink, but he is better known at the clubs as old Pinkie, and will answer to that appellation when apostrophised by dukes and other pleasant people of a standing superior to his. He is a Wicked Old Boy, and no mistake, who dyes his hair and keeps a glass permanently screwed in his eye, the better to ogle women with. One of the best dressed men in London, of course, for lady-killers must make personal adornment a study. His coats, boots, and gloves are things to see; but his hats transcend all description. He is said to share with Lord Hardwicke the recipe for keeping them always glossy; but others say that he buys a new hat every week.

He was a gay young man ever so long ago, and old men hopefully waited to see him become grave, but they waited in vain. Two things might have sobered him—a sudden loss of property or a busi-

ness-like wife ; but though he often ran into debt, and never had loose cash except on the day of winning a bet, he did not so far ruin his fortune as to have any stimulus to work. He would say, 'I must retrench ;' but an insinuating tradesman would book an order, a captivating mistress would extract a promise, or a light-hearted comrade would lead him off on some pleasurable expedition, and so the retrenchment was put off. Perhaps he mortgaged or borrowed, but he did it so discreetly that the world did not know it ; and his reputation for wealth made him a favourite among the women. They talked of his fine face and figure, of his taste and accomplishments, of the charm of his manner. But a poor man may have all these advantages without being interesting ; and the points that really weighed in his favour were his brougham, always at some friend's disposal ; his opera-box, so excellent an excuse for little suppers ; and the bouquets, for which his valet advanced the cash, and, for every two that his master had really bought, claimed payment for three at the end of the quarter.

People used to set down Pinkie as dissipated, and excused him on account of his youth ; but when he attained middle life he was a confirmed rake, as most women suspected, and many knew for certain. A young lady, a truer friend than most, who had been

able to withstand his wiles, and who saw that he had some good in him, tried to improve it; but he was spoiled by the flattery of other women, and did not catch at the opportunity of making a good match. It was from this time that his name was heard in connection with actresses; and though he had never compromised a woman in society, and the ladies liked him as well as ever, their husbands began to be a little uneasy if he paid them frequent visits. Then, after a few years more, the husbands ceased to be afraid at all. This was when, comparing the date of Pinkie's nativity with their own, they decided that he must have passed the age when men are dangerous; but he was more dangerous than he had ever been, precisely because he was less watched, and because women were less on their guard against him.

Men took Pinkie for a shallow fellow, but he was not. Ladies' men have winning qualities, tact, and a great deal of assurance. They must be pleasant talkers, considerate, and unassuming; they must have a clear perception of the objects they have in view, and a dexterous use of their means. It may not suit them to try and seduce all women, but they must show all that they think them worth courting, else they will arouse implacable resentments. A man who has a reputation for rakishness becomes the cynosure of women's eyes, and must keep up his

character for seductiveness under pain of bringing contempt, not on himself only, but on all the fair creatures whom he is said to have defeated. The number of these is always exaggerated. So are the fascinations of the victor.

It is a trying time for an old buck past his prime when he is introduced into a new house, and is aware that the hostess is intently surveying him to see what 'women can possibly have found to admire in such a creature.' He must have a deft compliment ready then to disarm the fair critic's prejudices at one stroke, and to force her into doing mental homage to his worth. 'Men,' said Lord Chesterfield, 'receive a man according to his coat, and take leave of him according to his merit.' Women receive a man according to his face, and take leave of him according to his speech. Wilkes used to say that it took him half an hour's conversation to obliterate the impression which his ugly features produced; but he did obliterate it, and was a favourite with women. No man can attain to this position if he is a common-place churl.

But he must not be too sincere a lover of women either, else his heart will be pulled into fragments. He must know their weaknesses the better to play upon them; and be wary of exciting a passion when he would merely rouse a whim. Fire is only dangerous

when it masters control, and it is the same with love. The woman who would make a jealous fury, if her passions be set boiling, may become a most agreeable *bonne amie* if nothing be done to heat her feelings above a genial warmth. The art of seduction is, after all, the art of amusing; and the true rake works upon a woman's senses, not upon her heart and soul.

More women are won by smiles than by sighs. The light banter, the soft compliment, the show of constant kindness, and above all the opportunity which makes the thief,—these make also the Lothario. Nor let it be forgotten that the measure of the rake's success is but that of Society's morals. Resist the man and he will withdraw, for he dislikes pitched battles and arduous sieges. His is the strategy which works a way into the citadel by insidious processes, by treason, or by sudden stormings, effected at a time when the assailant knows that the garrison is half-willing to capitulate.

If the rake undertakes a long siege it is one of patience, which resembles those affairs of old, when the two armies showed great mutual courtesy, and only exchanged shots at precise intervals and according to chivalrous rules—sieges which were conducted more with a view to killing time, or for the purpose of masking other military operations, than in the hope of conquest. Nevertheless, it is to be noticed

that as with fortified towns so with women—the combatant who lets herself be besieged generally ends by surrendering.

Our friend Pinkie was never in love, neither was he anxious that women should fall in love with him. Their friendship was all he cared for, and he sedulously watched over the reputation of women who would have compromised themselves from inexperience had he let them have their heads. He was a perfect tutor in the art of keeping oneself unspotted before the world. A grateful look, a gentle squeeze of the hand, were the only acknowledgments he made of intimate favours he had received; and women who trembled to meet him before third parties, fearing lest something in his manner should betray the understanding that existed between them, were soon set at their ease.

He was not one of those foolish pernicious fellows who cock their heads arrogantly after a *bonne fortune*, and think themselves entitled to treat a mistress with cavalier familiarity; on the contrary, he displayed the greater respect towards a woman from the moment when she had lost her own. In this way he insured respect for himself. It is by unmanly slights and neglect that a woman is driven into doing wild things, which open the eyes of husbands and lead to proceedings in the Divorce Court; but the bonds

which tied Pinkie to his Dulcineas were floral garlands, not iron chains, and they could be broken without effort when it suited either of the parties.

Pinkie never quarrelled with a woman, and retained her undiminished regard for years, after all flirting had ceased between them. Sometimes it would happen that a lady who had gone far—very far—with him would subsequently repent, and lead an exemplary life of religious puritanism; then Pinkie would show his tact by keeping altogether aloof from her, so that he might not revive burning memories. If he met her by chance he would do nothing to attract recognition; if she addressed him he would answer with a deferential bow; if she was alluded to in his presence he would speak of her in terms of reverence as a pattern of all the virtues. Impossible to be more socially correct than Pinkie.

The old buck is as active as ever with his tight boots and speckless gloves. There is no guessing his age from his appearance, for he pads and rouges himself like an old *traviata*. He has splendid teeth which are false, and beautiful curly gray hair, most of which is false likewise, but so artistically blended with his own that its falseness cannot be detected. Had he been less wise he would have dyed his hair black or brown; but he holds that a man ought not to try and take more than a quarter of a century from

his age, and he is content to pass for forty-five, being in fact very near seventy. Occasionally he powders his hair; but as his face is completely shaven this does not age him, but makes him look younger and fresher. He might revive the fashion of powder, if he got some other Old Boys as healthy and good-looking as himself to imitate him.

He has all the personal daintiness which women love; everything about him is of the finest quality, pleasant to the eye and touch. He has chambers in the Albany, which are luxurious as an actress's boudoir, and a river-side villa at Taplow, where he gives little garden-parties or Sunday dinners during the summer. Being very careful in his diet, Pinkie has preserved his digestion unimpaired; and as he is regular in taking daily exercise, his nerves and muscles are in capital condition. Somebody whom he can trust buys him handsome hacks of docile temper, which he rides in Rotten Row, cutting a very pretty figure of a dignified horseman, as even young and horsey bucks are fain to acknowledge.

The Old Boy's privilege of addressing a young woman as 'my dear' to her husband's face gives him a great advantage. The husband sees no harm in it, nor does he grow uneasy when the Old Boy brings presents of flowers, opera-boxes, and envied cards for such-and-such a party in Belgrave-square. He

makes bets of gloves, and, having lost them, there can be no objection to his taking the measure of the fair winner's hand, and paying her a compliment on its prettiness. At the opera he helps his fair guest to take off her cloak and put it on, and she finds that



he does this in a much more attentive way than her husband. There is an affectionate fatherliness in his manner of recommending her not to catch cold, and his hands are busy drawing the folds closer round her, and covering up her *décolletée* throat. It is the same when he packs her in the carriage, and draws the fur rug over her knees. Women like to be petted, fondled, pampered; and who can do this better than an Old Boy acting with a seductive purpose?

When the moment for declaring himself comes, Pinkie has generally got the turtle-dove in his power. Between astonishment and sensual emotion she drops, as the bird does, under the fascination of the snake. She is afraid to appeal to her husband; it would seem too absurd that she should need protection against an old man, of age to be his grandfather. Husbands are very unreasonable in such cases: they fly out, accuse their wives of having given thoughtless encouragement; or, worse still, they disbelieve the story, and say, 'How can you be so silly as to impute designs to an old man with white hair? You must have been mistaken, and you will render us both ridiculous if you are so prudish as that.' The fear of ridicule is often worse than the fear of shame, and women fall the more easily into dangers which they are afraid to confess.

Then generous men, like Pinkie, are such valuable friends, that it is impolitic, and sometimes perilous, to fall out with them. The Old Boy often prefaces his amatory enterprises by a loan of money to the husband, or by privately paying the wife's debts when he has seen her in low spirits about a milliner's bill. In doing this he said, 'Don't let your husband know anything of this, my dear. Pretty women must have pretty dresses; and Old Boys like me, who have plenty of spare guineas, are the proper persons to provide them. Now not a word, I beg, or else I shall think that you don't look upon me as a friend.' All this is charming; but when the hour of trial arrives, the turtle-dove's first thought is, that if she dismisses Pinkie with indignation that loan of money will have to be repaid, after a tearful avowal to the husband, which the latter will not like, and may remember bitterly all his days.

Financing plays as great a part in high-life seduction as it does in low; and the balance which the old rake keeps at his banker's is the necessary ammunition for his warfare against the other sex. But I repeat, Pinkie is a wicked Old Boy; and if some day one should hear of his being sharply chastised by some husband more wide awake than is usual, I shall not be distressed overmuch.

X.

THE CLERICAL OLD BOY.

My pious friend Lord Soberley, whose thoughts are intent upon ecclesiastical business, is not a bishop or an archdeacon, but only a layman, who began late in life to court the society of the clergy, to talk with them of their work, and even to hint at an inclination towards joining their ranks. Of his taking this last step there is little danger; for though Lord Soberley's character is thoroughly good and his zeal great, his knowledge of theology is too superficial to bear the test of a bishop's examination. He read the Bible but little in his youth, and when his musings began to take a serious turn he flattered himself that he knew much more of that book than he really does. He can apply a scriptural quotation with considerable effect to the events of daily life; but he would be puzzled to quote chapter and verse in support of the Thirty-nine Articles.

A Positivist having once endeavoured to prove to him that many of the Christian legends (as he called

them) were grafted on mythology, his lordship sat aghast, and had to back out of the wordy war for lack of ammunition. A young curate, to whom he mentioned this distressing matter subsequently, told him where the arguments might be found wherewith to rout the free-thinker; but unfortunately it was then too late, and besides Lord Soberley has not much time for reading.

While some make it their boast that they are ready to uphold the Church but not the clergy—which is, by the bye, just as though they were to say that they believe in medicine but not in doctors—Lord Soberley, on the contrary, is more concerned about the clergy than about the Church. He is regular in his attendance at the May meetings, sitting in a prominent place on the platform at Exeter Hall, and having always something to say. He proudly points to himself as a specimen of the friendly feeling between the nation and the Establishment, and he fights the Liberationists with weapons of grave sarcasm. He is not so afraid of a Dissenter as of a Positivist; for the ignorance of the Jumping sects generally equals their violence, while their violence is apt to give way in presence of a lord.

The clergy do not like Lord Soberley, though. He is too meddlesome and too strict. He is a Churchman without being a Sacerdotalist; and whilst he

would delight to see every parish rector and his curate well paid, he would not give them authority over our souls and bodies, through the confessional, as the new school of Ritualists would desire. He calls himself a Protestant—a name held in execration at St. Alban's, Holborn, and St. James's, Hatcham. He once thought himself a High Churchman, because he approved of choral services and the wearing of a surplice in the pulpit; but the priests of the Church Union, with their chasubles, copes, incense-pots, and crucifixes, have got far beyond him. He cannot understand their drift, nor they his bewilderment.

He talks of the glorious Reformation; they say 'Pish!' and call Henry VIII. and Luther a pair of unclean fellows, who played fast and loose with religion for matrimonial ends. Lord Soberley gets as many ugly knocks from partisans of Messrs. Dale, Tooth, and Mackonochie as from Nonconformists and heretics; and out of the half-dozen clerical journals extant four are constantly sneering at him as the 'lay Pope.'

He is clerical in appearance, for he wears black clothes and a white tie, and is unctuous even in his familiar discourse. He alludes to himself as a miserable sinner, and exhorts people whom he meets in railway-carriages to be on their guard against the

Evil One. His lectures at mechanics' institutes and such places partake rather of the nature of sermons than of addresses, and might make his hearers yawn but for the fact that he purchases his right to be prosy by very liberal donations towards all charitable objects. He is a founder of coffee-taverns, and working-men's clubs conducted on temperance principles. He takes fallen women in hand, and is an amateur inspector of reformatories.

Generally chosen to sit on Royal Commissions appointed for some philanthropic purpose, he draws up the exhaustive reports which are submitted to Parliament, and which form the basis of legislation as to pauperism or drunkenness. He is of course a rigid Sabbatarian, and cannot view the sale of beer, or even the opening of Museums, on Sundays without horror. He is also inclined to sympathise with all sentimental movements—anti-vivisection, anti-bellucose, and so forth—and attends the meetings convoked in their favour, though less often to offer a new suggestion than with the vague idea of 'supporting the chair,' even though the chair can support itself.

The idea of 'supporting' persons and resolutions is rooted in Lord Soberley's nature. He comes more and more to believe that he is quite necessary to the well-being of every good man and to the success of every good work. Knowing that he does all he can,

he cannot conceive how little is that all. If asked to join a new association, he weighs his answer carefully before adding so important a personage as himself to its patrons (even though he may have been minded to join it all along); and if an old institution offends him, he looks upon his own withdrawal as the bitterest vengeance that can be taken. His views are generally sensible, but he is strangely unable to sympathise with those of others. Why cannot they think as he thinks and do as he does? Why are not all young people brought up as they were in his time? So, with the most benevolent intentions and with the mildest manners, the pious old gentleman is really a tyrant.

As is natural, he encounters least opposition in his own parish church. His family built the church (in consideration, *entre nous*, of some abbey-lands), therefore of course he must legislate for it. The bishop is the patron; but he has under two bishops succeeded in nominating the rectors. Sometimes a bishop, divided between two or three candidates of equal merit, is glad of an expression of opinion from a prominent layman; and it is certainly best that squire and parson should be agreed. But our Old Boy's idea of agreement is that the parson should agree with *him*.

There is a pew in the chancel which my lord

never uses, preferring the nave; but if a stranger ventures into it he incurs the owner's wrath; and when the parson asked that he might put his choir there, and let the gallery fall down, as it threatened to do, Lord Soberley's astonishment was too deep for words. But he repaired the gallery handsomely and presented new hymn-books, for even his refusals are given in lordly style. On a question of extra services, his reply was: 'What do the people want with them? I don't want them. Well, well, let them have the service, if they want it;' and again he muttered, 'but I don't want it.'

This slight ostentation and selfishness are, however, only the results of the Old Boy's having so many toadies, who persuade him that he is the main prop of the Church. In his parish he is consulted as much as the rector; and it is no wonder if some of the poor folks should think him to be in orders, for he reads the lessons in church on Sundays, as laymen are privileged to do. Standing at the lectern, his style is florid and showy, contrasting much with his earnest simplicity in reading family prayers at home; for Lord Soberley is truly a good man, and trains his household in ways of piety. His butler, coachman, and footmen are all steady-going religionists, and his servant-girls put their wages into the savings-bank.

As to my lord's relatives, the only condition on which they can obtain his good graces is being well reported of for a godly manner of living. He is no friend to young men who waste their time in dissipation, and young women who exhibit themselves with bare busts, and think it no sin to waltz and drink champagne all through the night, and every night throughout the season. Having been wild himself in his younger days, if reports speak truly, Lord Soberley is now the more particular in insisting that social amusements sow the seeds of much after remorse.

The last time I saw him he was being piloted through a Sunday-school by a pretty niece of his, whom he had converted, and who, eschewing gay dresses and fluffy poodle curls, had taken to attiring herself in modest stillness and unadorned drabs. I suspect the sly puss will have no cause to regret her transformation; for they say her uncle will dower her handsomely when she marries, and leave her the bulk of his fortune when he dies.

Doubtless there are many other well-known types of Old Boys whom I have left unnoticed. But my object has been rather to jot down personal reminiscences than to draw up a catalogue. Those to whom I have alluded—not unkindly, I hope—may serve



LORD SOBERLEY BEING PIOTED THROUGH SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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as representatives of the whole class, and so much the better if there were no downright knave among them; for I like to think of Old Boys as outgrowing the vices of youth more often than its virtues. Experience is worth nothing to an Old Boy if it has not taught him to be honest and honourable—and I think it generally has taught him that lesson more frequently than any other.



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